

Windows 10

—The First—

BIG UPDATE

SUPERB NEW TOOLS • SMARTER APPS • URGENT FIXES

Why **NOW** is the time to upgrade **p36**

PLUS

**STOP GOOGLE SECRETLY
RECORDING YOUR VOICE**



Yes, Google really does do this! page 48

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Stop worrying and love Windows 10

You may look at our cover this issue and think: "Hasn't Web User been telling us *not* to upgrade to Windows 10, and now all of a sudden they love it! What a bunch of flip-floppers!". Well, let me tell you – this magazine ain't for turning, and it's getting too cold for flip-flops.

It's true, we were initially apprehensive about Windows 10 because of the catches that Microsoft didn't mention; and alarmed by its invasion of users' privacy. But we've always thought it was a pretty good OS and, with the release of the Fall Update, it's almost (but not quite) perfect.

In this issue's 10-page Windows 10 special, we pick our favourite new tools in the updated OS, reveal which problems Microsoft has fixed (and which it hasn't) and suggest how it could be improved further.

And if that isn't enough Windows 10 content for you, don't forget that our 'Definitive Guide to Windows 10' is still available from Amazon at bit.ly/guidetowindows10.

Robert Irvine
robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk
[#webuser](#)



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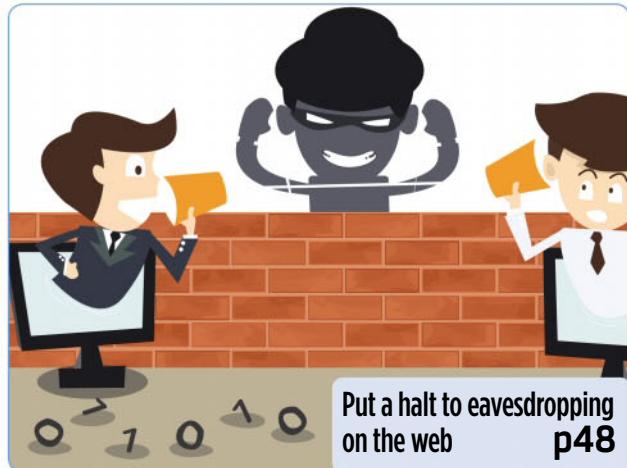
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What's New Online

Stop companies tracking you in Firefox's Private Browsing



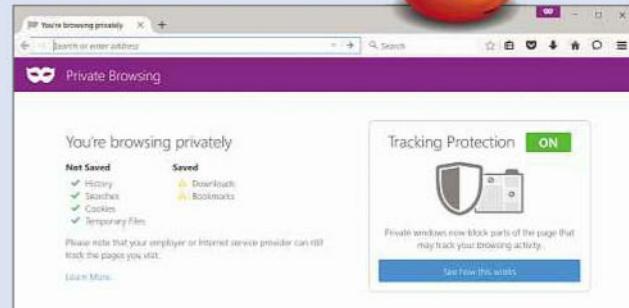
Mozilla has added a feature to Firefox which, it claims, you won't find in Chrome, Edge, Internet Explorer or Safari: the ability to block companies tracking you while you browse the web in private mode.

You'd be forgiven for assuming that a mode described as 'private' already did this, but it actually only stops details being stored 'locally' – that is, your browsing history and cookies. Rather than being truly private, it's really an 'anonymous'

mode (or 'incognito' in Chrome) that prevents anyone who uses your PC knowing where you've been online.

The new tool, called Tracking Protection, goes further by preventing websites from leaking your browsing activity to other companies. Mozilla says it will thwart marketing code that follows you from site to site. This is often embedded in adverts or in the social-media buttons that litter the web.

There is a problem, though. With Tracking Protection turned on – and it is, by default – elements on some websites won't load properly. If you trust a website, click the shield icon on



the left-hand side of your browser bar to open the new Control Centre, then click 'Disable protection for this session' (see screenshot, left).

To learn more about the new feature, and how Mozilla identifies the tools that track you, visit its support site (bit.ly/trackinghelp384). Visit the link below for download links to Firefox 42. bit.ly/fox384



Send one-tap replies in Gmail

www.google.co.uk/inbox

Over the next few years, you're going to read a lot about Google's 'machine learning' technology – tools that teach themselves how to respond better to your needs. One of these is the new Smart Reply feature in the Gmail Inbox app (Android and iOS). When it thinks you've received an email that requires a short, simple response, it suggests up to three pre-written replies that you can just tap to send. In its Gmail blog (bit.ly/gmail384), Google says Smart Reply will learn which responses you prefer (and which you don't like), and suggest more of the same.

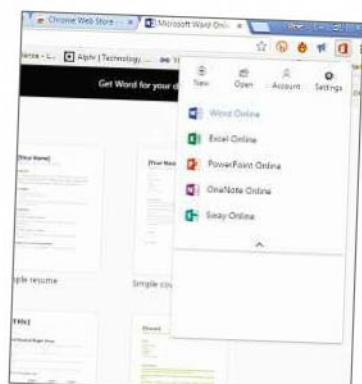


Open Office documents within Chrome

bit.ly/chromeoffice384

In the long term, Microsoft wants to persuade millions of people to switch from Chrome or Firefox to Edge. We'll see whether that happens but, in the meantime, Microsoft wants to encourage people sticking with those browsers to use its software. With this in mind, Microsoft has released a Chrome extension for Office Online, letting you create, open and edit Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote and Sway documents from within the browser. Once you've added the extension, click the small Office logo in the top-right corner to see the options.

The extension is part of a major update to Office (explained in Microsoft's blog: bit.ly/officeblog384) that also integrates Skype into Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote and Outlook.com. This lets you chat to your Skype contacts using voice and video within each of the programs, and saves your messaging so you can pick up where you left off.



We highlight 10 of the most amazing and amusing things you can do on the web this fortnight

Climb Mount Kinabalu in Street View

bit.ly/borneo384

This is the majestic view that awaits you at the top of Mount Kinabalu, Malaysia's tallest mountain. It's the highlight of Google's new Street View collection for Borneo, which also includes a cruise down Kinabatangan River - home to proboscis monkeys and Sumatran rhinos - and a visit to the Sepilok Orang Utan Reserve.



Make your own BBC weather reports



www.bbc.co.uk/weather/watchers

Do you want to "tell the story of the UK's weather"?

That's the BBC's rather grand way of introducing its Weather Watchers website, which lets you make your own weather reports to share on a UK map. Once you've signed up, click the 'Create a report' button, move the temperature slider and add a photo. It's a great idea: a crowd-sourced hub of information on the one subject that everybody in Britain loves talking about. You can read more about it on the BBC's Internet Blog: bit.ly/weather384.

Zoom into largest ever photo of space

gds.astro.rub.de

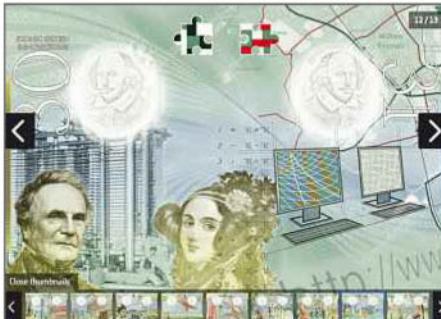
At 46 billion pixels, this photo of the Milky Way is the largest image of space ever created. Astronomers at the Ruhr University Bochum's observatory in Chile's Atacama Desert spent five years taking photos, then stitched 268 sections together to create a whopping 194GB image. That's too big for an ordinary PC to download, hence this online viewer which lets you zoom deep into our galaxy. You can also search for stars and other heavenly bodies. Type 'Eta Carinae' to see the image below.



Flick through the new UK passport

bit.ly/passport384

This is our favourite page in the new UK passport, commemorating the work of two computing pioneers: Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage. Lovelace is one of only two British women honoured in the passport, a decision that triggered accusations of sexism. The other is architect Elisabeth Scott, who designed the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.



5

TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@GarminUK

News on the latest Garmin products, plus sporty photos of them in action

@PeanutsMovie

Clips from the first *Peanuts* film in 35 years, in cinemas this December

@plex

Updates on the media-server app, which has been added to Apple TV

@RevRichardColes

Wise words from the ex-Communard turned C of E priest and Radio 4 presenter

@HotspotShield

Privacy tips from the VPN tool, now available for Chrome and Firefox



Listen to more podcasts on Deezer

bit.ly/deezer384

Deezer has doubled the number of podcasts it offers to 40,000, five months after adding the first batch to its catalogue. Premium+ members (£9.99 a month) can now download them to listen offline.

Download Amazon Prime music to SD card

bit.ly/prime384

Amazon Prime Music subscribers can now download tracks from the app to a phone's SD card. Amazon says this was Prime Music members' most requested feature.

Record games you play on Android

bit.ly/play384

Google's Play Games app - pre-installed on most Android devices - now has a screen-recording option, like YouTube Gaming (bit.ly/tube384). Both apps let you record your reactions and commentary with your camera and microphone.



BBC launches download store for TV shows

What happened?

The BBC is taking on Netflix and Amazon with its own digital store selling TV shows from its archives.

The BBC Store (store.bbc.com) lets you browse, buy and download more than 7,000 hours of the Beeb's programming, including popular series such as *Doctor Who*, *Sherlock* and *Only Fools and Horses*, and rarer shows from the last 60 years. The BBC has said that only a tenth of the shows it has produced are currently available on DVD, so it hopes to offer a wider range of viewing via digital downloads. Indeed, it aims to have 10,000 hours of content available by the end of the year, and plans to add 55 to 70 hours of shows each week.

Prices start from £1.89 for a single episode, with a six-part series costing from £7.99, although the BBC said it will keep its prices in line with rival services.

The older shows on offer include controversial episodes that can't be shown on television uncut, because they feature content that's no longer considered politically correct – for example, Seventies sitcom *It Ain't Half Hot Mum*. That's handy for viewers who feel nostalgic for popular shows from their youth, but some of the racist, homophobic and sexist language they include might come as a shock to others.

How will it affect you?

Don't worry about the BBC Store replacing the iPlayer – that's still available to watch for free or, if you're watching shows live, after paying the licence fee. You'll also be told if a show on the BBC Store is currently available on iPlayer, so you don't pay for



something you can see for free.

If you already watch BBC shows on Netflix or Amazon, don't fret – they'll still be available on those services for the foreseeable future. That said, some of the series will only be available as exclusives on the BBC Store, particularly older content.

The BBC also emphasises that the service won't be available to viewers living overseas: it's only for UK residents and there are no plans to roll it out around the world. However, there's nothing to stop people downloading the shows to watch offline while in the UK, and mobile apps should be launched before Christmas.

What do we think?

This is a great way to open up the BBC archives, although it will annoy some viewers who feel that they've already paid for the content once via the licence fee. The BBC argues that the site works in a similar way to DVDs – a logic that's hard to disagree with – and points out that the licence fee covers the iPlayer but not the Store. However, it's a shame the BBC isn't promoting the service by offering a few free downloads; instead, there's a 25% discount available on your first purchase.

The store also gives the BBC another way to rake in revenue for its programming as more people shift to watching on-demand rather than live,

5 BBC STORE HIGHLIGHTS

Muffin the Mule

bit.ly/muffin384

Four episodes of the legendary children's series from the 1950s



Threads

bit.ly/threads384

Harrowing 1984 drama depicting the effects of a nuclear attack on Britain

Yes Minister

bit.ly/minister384

Every series of the classic comedy and its sequel, *Yes, Prime Minister*



Dennis Potter at the BBC

bit.ly/potter384

16 brilliant dramas from the controversial writer, dating back to 1965

David Attenborough

bit.ly/attenborough384

Stunningly shot wildlife documentaries to download and keep forever



for which they don't need to buy a TV licence. Additionally, it should be noted that fewer people are buying DVDs, and many laptops no longer come with optical drives. With so much of the BBC's revenue previously coming from DVD sales, it needs to find a better way to reflect and profit from modern viewing habits, and the BBC Store is the perfect solution.



What we think of this fortnight's top tech news stories and rumours, and how they affect you

Microsoft's unlimited cloud storage ends

What happened?

Microsoft has blamed a "small number of users" for abusing its online storage service OneDrive, and has introduced a 1TB cap. Previously, anyone with a subscription to Office 365 got unlimited OneDrive storage as part of the deal. That's been scrapped because some users were backing up multiple PCs and storing entire movie collections, with some totalling a whopping 75TB.

Microsoft is also capping free OneDrive storage. You can still get free cloud storage without using Office 365, but it's being cut from 15GB to just 5GB.

How will it affect you?

The cut from 15GB to 5GB will be applied in early 2016, so if you're using the free OneDrive service, you might want to take some time over Christmas to clean out your account. You will still be able to access your files for at least 12 months, so don't panic that Microsoft will delete them. The company is also offering OneDrive users a free Office 365 Personal subscription,

which comes with 1TB of storage. This is an excellent deal, but remember that you'll have to pay the £60 annual subscription once the free period is up.

If you're an Office 365 subscriber using more than 1TB of storage, you'll also have 12 months to sort out your account. If the reduced storage means you no longer want to use the service, you can get a refund.

What do we think?

Microsoft can't be surprised that some users abused this free storage – it was bound to happen. It's a shame that the company is capping all users rather than simply dealing with the worst offenders. Why let a few people ruin it for everyone?

It's unclear why Microsoft is also slashing its free storage. The 5GB freebie is miserly, but the free Office 365 subscription offer does assuage our anger – if you've been considering trying the cloud versions of Word, Excel and the rest, save yourself £60 and get it this way.



Government updates 'Snoopers' Charter'



What happened?

The Government has unveiled its latest attempt to get online surveillance laws on the books. The latest effort, called the Investigatory Powers Bill, is currently a draft – it will be debated by MPs and is subject to change before the final version is put before Parliament.

The new version of the bill – often referred to as the 'Snoopers' Charter' – will see the government require web and communication firms to keep metadata on users – including who they send messages to and when – but not the content of those messages. The bill requires ISPs to log every website we visit, but not every page within that site, in case security services need to view that info.

The bill does, for the first time, introduce 'judicial oversight' to surveillance. Security services, police and other public bodies will need to get a judge's permission before intercepting your messages or using hacking techniques to access your PC, although they will still

have the power to view your browsing history.

How will it affect you?

The bill is only a draft, so amendments are expected. This is really the starting point for the debate, and there's agreement and disagreement from all sides of the political spectrum. If you disagree with any aspect of the bill, now would be an excellent time to contact your MP to let them know.

What do we think?

This is a complicated piece of law, and it's impossible to say if it's good or bad news. Aspects of it are an improvement over previous 'Snoopers' Charters', particularly the judicial oversight. But the devil is in the detail: if the judges don't get full information about what they're approving because of time constraints, then it's not much of an improvement.

We'll have to wait and see, but it's hard to feel positive about legislation that enshrines in law the government's right to see nearly everything we do online.



Windows 7 and 8.1 to be discontinued next year

What happened?

Microsoft confirmed that from 1 November 2016, you will no longer be able to buy any PCs or laptops running Windows 7 or 8.1. The company updated its Windows Lifecycle Fact Sheet page (bit.ly/lifestyle384) with an 'end of sales' date of 31 October 2016 for both operating systems, which means that if you buy a new computer, you won't have any choice other than to use Windows 10.

Microsoft's usual procedure is to discontinue its previous operating system two years after the new one is released. Windows 10 has only been available since 29 July, so Windows 8.1 will have a shorter shelf life than usual. Conversely, Windows 7 should have been completely discontinued last October, but while PCs running the Home Basic, Home Premium and Ultimate versions were taken off sale at that time, Windows 7 Professional was granted a two-year reprieve.

How will it affect you?

If you need a new PC, but you don't want to use Windows 10, you'd better



hurry up and buy one soon, although you'll now only be able to get the Professional version of Windows 7. If you're running Windows 7 or 8.1 on your current machine, there's no need to panic because Microsoft will still deliver security updates to the two operating systems until January 2020 and January 2023 respectively. This is because Windows 7 is still covered by 'extended support', while Windows 8.1 will remain in 'mainstream support' for the next few years.

You should also bear in mind that with Microsoft aggressively pushing the

Windows 10 upgrade to Windows 7 and 8.1 users, going so far as to download the installation files whether you want them or not (see our cover feature on page 36), there may ultimately be no escape from the new operating system.

What do we think?

We suspected from the beginning that although

Windows 10 was originally touted as an optional upgrade, it would eventually become the only choice available. Microsoft is a business, after all, and it's keen for PC users to move on from its old, outdated software and embrace its new OS.

We also think that the company is keen to move on from the embarrassment of Windows 8. By preventing the sale of PCs that run the older operating system, it can effectively pretend it never happened. However, with millions of people worldwide still using the outdated and unsupported Windows XP, we reckon this could be more difficult than Microsoft hopes!



FIRST LOOK

OnePlus X oneplus.net/uk/x

The OnePlus X is the second flagship phone this year from Chinese manufacturer OnePlus. Like the OnePlus 2 and the OnePlus One, you can only buy it via invitation, but it's less expensive than the latter, with the cheapest version costing a mere £199 inc VAT.

The OnePlus X is a smaller device than the OnePlus 2, with a 5in, 1,080 x 1,920-resolution AMOLED display. It's available in two exotic finishes – Onyx (£199), and Ceramic (£269) – and runs OnePlus' own version of Android 5.1.1 – OxygenOS. Significant features include its new 13-megapixel camera – complete with isocell sensor tech, phase

detect autofocus and an f/2.2 aperture – and a front-facing camera with an impressively high resolution of 8 megapixels. As with the OnePlus 2, the X has a handy Alert Slider that lets you switch between three different

sound profiles.

The internal components of the OnePlus X make it a bit of an odd beast. Powering the phone is the generation-old quad-core Qualcomm



Snapdragon 801 processor, running at 2.3GHz and accompanied by 3GB of RAM, an Adreno 330 graphics processor and 16GB of storage, expandable to 128GB via a microSD slot. We haven't seen this combination of components in a phone since the days of the OnePlus One and the LG G3. What's slightly more concerning is the size of the battery. It's only 2,525mAh in capacity, which is down by nearly 800mAh on the OnePlus 2 – and we weren't blown away with the stamina of that phone.

It's hard to say at this stage how good the OnePlus X is going to be. On the one hand, the design looks absolutely stunning, especially the ceramic model; on the other, the specifications aren't exactly cutting-edge, and the battery in particular seems on the small side.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is Google going to merge Android with Chrome OS?

For years, Google has been a two-man show when it comes to operating systems. First, there was Android for smartphones and tablets; then came Chrome OS, a browser-based operating system that runs on low-cost laptops called Chromebooks. Unlike the massively successful Android, which is the now most used OS on the planet, Chrome OS accounts for less than 3% of operating systems worldwide.

Despite the wildly different usage statistics, we were still surprised when the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Google is planning to merge the two operating systems. According to the *WSJ*: "Google engineers have been working for roughly two years to combine the operating systems and have made progress recently. The company plans to unveil its new, single operating system in 2017, but expects to show off an early version next year."

Rumours suggest that the combined OS will be unveiled at Google's I/O developers conference, and make the event "the most exciting in its history".

However, after the *WSJ* broke the news, Hiroshi Lockheimer, Senior Vice President of Android, Chromecast, and Chrome, tweeted: "There's a ton of momentum for Chromebooks and we are very committed to Chrome OS. I just bought two for my kids for schoolwork!". Google told tech-news site The Verge (bit.ly/theverge384) that



Chrome OS is not being "killed", but also confirmed that it *is* working on a merged Android/Chrome OS operating system.

LIKELIHOOD RATING



Confusingly, it seems that Google is going to combine Android and Chrome OS, while also maintaining them separately. This sounds like lot of effort, so we wonder if it has another trick up its sleeve, such as creating an entirely new type of device for the hybrid OS.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

BeeLine

bit.ly/beeline384 | From £30

Using Google Maps on your phone while you're riding your bike can be both difficult and dangerous, which is what makes the BeeLine such a brilliant idea. Mount this small, circular device on your handlebar, enter a destination into its free app and it will point you in the right direction using its backlit screen. The BeeLine is waterproof and shockproof, so it can withstand bad weather and bumpy roads. When you're not using it for navigation, it displays your speed and distance travelled, and the time. The team has already surpassed its target of raising £60,000 by 27 November.



WEBOMETER



WE LIKE...

Facebook introduces music-sharing feature

Facebook's new 'music stories' feature lets you share 30-second clips of your favourite songs from Spotify and Apple Music. The feature is currently only available on iOS devices.



Amazon Prime offers same-day delivery for Londoners

Amazon Prime customers who live inside the M25 can now enjoy unlimited same-day delivery on over a million items at no extra cost. Eligible products must be ordered before noon and will be delivered between 6pm and 10pm on that evening.



WE DON'T LIKE...

Apps leak user data

A recent study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) found that popular mobile apps share a lot of user information with third parties. 73% of the Android apps tested shared email addresses, while 47% of iOS apps shared users' location data.



Bond snubs Android phones

Daniel Craig reportedly rejected multi-million dollar deals from Sony and Samsung to feature their devices in *Spectre*, because he and director Sam Mendes deemed the phones not good enough for James Bond.





Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

SECURITY ALERT! | What's been bothering us this fortnight

Vodafone customers' details stolen

The accounts of 1,827 Vodafone customers have been accessed by hackers, potentially revealing their names, mobile numbers and bank details, the telecoms company has admitted. A spokesperson for Vodafone said the leak was not due to a breach of its systems, but that it "was driven by criminals using email addresses and passwords acquired from an unknown source external to Vodafone". No credit-card details were accessed, but the spokesperson warned that leaked information could leave victims susceptible to fraud and phishing attempts. Affected customers have been contacted and their accounts have been blocked until their details are changed. The revelation came only days after the TalkTalk hack that



affected 157,000 of its customers and caused its share value to plummet.
bit.ly/vodafone384

Snapchat clarifies changes to its terms of service

Snapchat users were understandably concerned by recent changes to the app's terms and conditions, in which it claimed the right to store, reproduce and publish their content. However, in a blog post published on its website, the popular messaging app has since clarified the changes to its privacy policy. The company states that messages will continue to be automatically deleted from its servers once they've been read by recipients, emphasising that "Snapchat is not – and never has been – stockpiling your private Snaps or Chats". It continues, however, to explain that changes were necessary, in order for collaborative features such as Live Stories (where users contribute



snaps to the same story) to exist. To read the full blog post, visit: bit.ly/snapchat384

Web-hosting firm leaks millions of passwords

Free web-hosting firm 000webhost leaked the passwords of 13 million users in plain text, according to Bitdefender. The breach was first made public by security expert Troy Hunt (of haveibeenowned.com) on 29 October 2015, although the user records were stolen more than five months earlier. Following the revelation, 000webhost posted a notice on its website saying that it was fixing the problems with its website. Bitdefender stresses the importance of using different passwords for different websites, so that hackers cannot access multiple accounts with the same credentials.

bit.ly/webhost384



Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Andy Heather, VP EMEA at HPE Security
- Data Security (www.hpenterprisesecurity.com)

Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Q Following the recent hacks of TalkTalk and Vodafone (see story, above), can we really trust any companies to keep our personal details safe any more?

Adam Knight, Facebook

A Following any high profile cyberattack, there are questions about who, how and what was to blame, but to an extent these are immaterial. Most firms collect significant personal data on their customers, such as addresses and dates of birth. If left unprotected, this info can give attackers almost all the data they need to undertake fraudulent activity against customers.

These breaches highlight a need for companies to place tight controls on how sensitive info is protected. If data is left unprotected, it's not a matter of *if* it will be compromised but *when*. Even

the best security cannot keep attackers away from key data in all circumstances. A company needs to assume that all other security measures may fail, and the data must be a primary focus for protection via encryption. It is critical this protection includes all potentially sensitive information and not just financially related data.

Many leading companies already employ format-preserving encryption. Taking a data-centric approach to security means attackers would end up with unusable encrypted data instead of the current outcomes, where customers' personal data can end up in the hands

of cybercriminals.

The theft of financial, credit card or account information has a limited lifespan if the victim changes their account details. But personal information obtained by accessing someone's account profile has a much broader use and can be used to commit a wider range of fraud and identity theft, and this info can't always be changed.

Encryption is essential to protect customer data throughout its entire lifecycle. This, along with a robust security stance, is the way to stop criminals profiting from stolen data.



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Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

SHOPPING

NEW

Waitrose Kitchen

www.waitrosekitchen.com

If you suffer from soggy stews and bland baking, you'll love this fabulous new site from Waitrose, which sells thousands of quality cookware products. The smart, simple design lets you browse items by category and brand, and explore inspirational themes such as the best products for making chutney or the ideal serveware to make a takeaway look special. There are helpful buying guides, tips and advice, and each item includes useful information such as whether it's dishwasher-friendly or scratchproof. Free delivery requires a minimum spend of £30, but you can collect items from a Waitrose store the following day.

Our rating



Shop by category

Food preparation
Gadgets & utensils
Kitchen appliances
Cookware
Baking & icing
Dining & glassware
Kitchen storage
Homebrew & preserve
Cookbooks
[View all >](#)

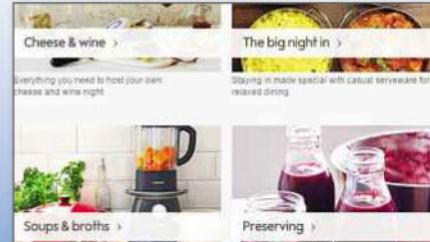


How to choose the perfect
pan for you

[Find out more](#)

CATEGORIES

Products range from gadgets and utensils to cookware and cookbooks



TRENDING

Discover the best items to use for various food tasks and occasions

Waitrose Kitchen

[Shop Kitchen](#)

[Shop by...](#)



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What's trending



Cheese & wine >

Home Blog Severe Weather Outlook Gallery UK SEVERE WEATHER

UK SEVERE WEATHER
The number ONE place for severe weather updates

Click for the latest Severe Weather Outlook

London, United Kingdom Thu Oct. 29, 2015 01:19

ABOUT
Welcome to UK Severe Weather. This is the number ONE place for severe weather updates for the United Kingdom. Here at UK Severe Weather we like to focus on the severe aspect of the ever changing weather. However we do give updates on all weather even if it is not severe. We also have news and stories of current severe weather events affecting the United Kingdom. This is not a forecasting service but place where information and analysis of weather is put together. All data at your fingertips. We hope you find interesting and useful resources here and we appreciate any feedback.

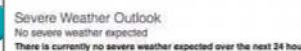
FEEDBACK
Feedback is an important part of this website. We rely on you to tell us what you think so we can improve it and adjust it to make it the best as it can be.

WEATHER

UK Severe Weather
www.uksevereweather.com

We Brits love to discuss the weather, be it mild, nippy or hot enough for the tabloids to namecheck the Costa Del Sol. So a website that covers the UK's most extreme weather should prove popular – even if it also provides updates on all weather, severe or not. It's early days, so the content is still building, but we like the gallery of stormy skies, the seven-day forecast and the section showing the expected chance of severe weather over the next 24 hours (none, when we visited). There's also a blog that offers in-depth analysis of extreme weather in the UK and in countries with more interesting climates. It's certainly worth bookmarking as the cold winter months approach.

NEW



Severe Weather Outlook

No severe weather expected

There is currently no severe weather expected over the next 24 hours.

Home Store T42 Domestic Search

DiedInHouse

What is DiedInHouse.com?
DiedInHouse.com is the one of the first and easiest websites that helps you find out if someone has died in your property. It's a database with over 100,000 homes and it's completely free to use. It's a valuable resource for anyone looking for information about deaths in homes.

Has Someone Died In Your House?
Enter your address
DiedInHouse.com can learn any history in the house
Search Now

PROPERTY

DiedInHouse.com
www.diedinhouse.com

NEW

PROPERTY

DiedInHouse.com

www.diedinhouse.com

If you're dying to know whether anyone has ever passed away in your property, DiedInHouse.com can tell you. The site currently only covers US homes, but we're sure it will expand to the UK soon, so you'll be able to check if someone was murdered in your bathroom or expired on the sofa. The owners say the service has a serious purpose, because deaths in homes are not required to be disclosed when a property is sold and can affect the value. On the downside, it charges a heart-stopping \$11.99 (£7.86) for a single search, with no refunds, so it's not really aimed at the casually morbidly curious.

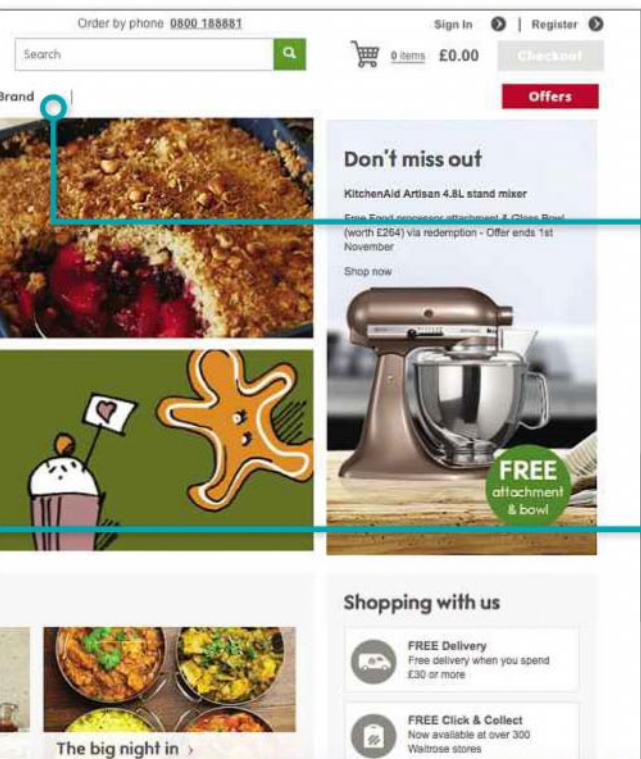
Our rating

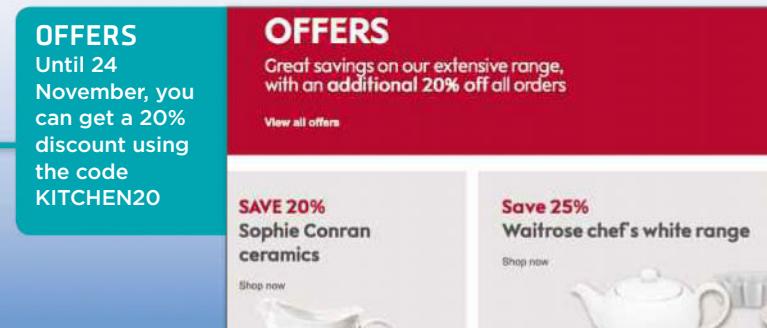
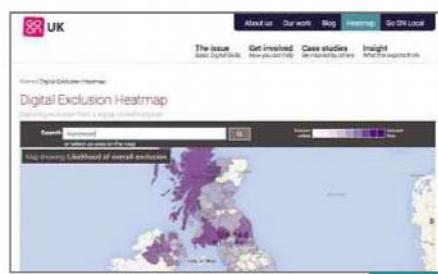


Our rating



We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features



TECHNOLOGY

Digital Exclusion Heatmap

bit.ly/digital384

It's easy to forget that the digital revolution has yet to touch everyone in the UK. This heat map shows how likely it is that people in a specific local authority will be excluded from digital services, taking into account the age, education, income and health of residents. Enter a postcode, town or city to see the likelihood of being excluded, from low to high, along with interesting facts about the percentage of households not receiving at least 2Mbps broadband and the number of adults with only basic digital skills. It certainly makes you think.

NEW



CHARITY

The Big Give

www.thebiggive.org.uk

Launched in 2007, The Big Give offers a quick and easy way to find charities to donate to. This revamp removes the clutter of the old layout in favour of a bolder, cleaner design. Although the search box has inconveniently been moved much lower down the page, the News section is a great addition and there's more info about how The Big Give benefits charities, individuals and schools. We also like that fees are more clearly explained – a £10 donation with £2.50 Gift Aid passes £12 to your chosen charity – and the running total of the amount raised over the years.

RELAUNCH



PIRACY

Get It Right From A Genuine Site

www.getitrightfromagenuine.org

Since the dawn of the internet, piracy has been a thorn in the side of the entertainment industry, allowing web users to download digital goodies for free. This new campaign tries to prick the conscience of consumers by comparing a world in which people pay for creative content to another in which they access content illegally. The most useful part of the site is undoubtedly the Genuine Sites section, which shows safe and legal UK outlets for buying music, films, ebooks and games, as well as genuine providers of streaming sports coverage.

NEW

Our rating



Our rating





DS115j AND DS215j

THE PERFECT DATA STORAGE
SOLUTION FOR YOUR HOME

Run your own personal cloud from the comfort
and security of your home



POWER-SAVING AND RELIABLE

DS215j features a dual-core CPU, supports up to 12TB of data and consumes less than 14w when active while the DS115j offers a stable storage environment for users with no need for raid, consuming less than 11w when active.

ACCESS ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Synology NAS' and the intuitive DiskStation Manager (DSM) software allow users to sync and share files among multiple devices, including Windows PC, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android and Windows Phone.

MULTIMEDIA CENTRE

Audio Station, Photo Station, Video Station and Media Server transform your Synology NAS into a centralised multimedia hub.

Where to Buy

amazon.co.uk

The electronics specialist
maplin

Synology apps available on

iOS



Synology's Media Accolades



</> Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Current design trends could harm your site

It's easy to look at the latest trends in web design and jump on the bandwagon, but it might not always be a good idea. Before you rush to redesign your website with the latest craze in distinct horizontal bands of content, where users have to scroll down to see the next section of your web page, take a look at Liraz Margalit's critique of the concept at Neuromarketing (bit.ly/hor384). Her research suggests that although these sites look great, visitors may not realise that there's more content to scroll down to, which means they could miss a lot of a site's content.

Free WordPress shop theme

There are loads of free themes around for WordPress websites but they are usually limited in what you can do with them,



because theme designers want anyone likely to profit from their work to pay for extra tools. Themelise (www.themeisle.com) is bucking this trend with Shop Isle, a beautiful, responsive online shop theme for WordPress. To try setting up a shop for free, download it from bit.ly/shop384.

Deal of the Fortnight

CyberHostUK (www.cyberhostuk.net) is offering 25% off all hosting packages. Enter '25OFF' into the Promotional Code box to get the discount.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Edmund Turbin, Sales Engineer, WP Engine
(wpengine.com)



Q What's the easiest way to build your own WordPress theme from scratch?

Sam Higgins, Facebook

A Building a theme can be daunting, even for seasoned developers. If you are constructing it from the ground up, it can be easier to use a theme framework to begin from a solid starting point. These provide a modern development stack (everything you'll need to get started) and many include the ability to use task automation, SASS (an upgraded version of CSS) and Bootstrap (a simple framework to build your site on). An established theme framework will provide you with a structured way to create your pages, and will include excellent documentation to help you figure things out quickly.

MINI WORKSHOP | Improve security on your self-hosted WordPress website

WordPress.com: www.wordpress.com | 10 mins | Any browser

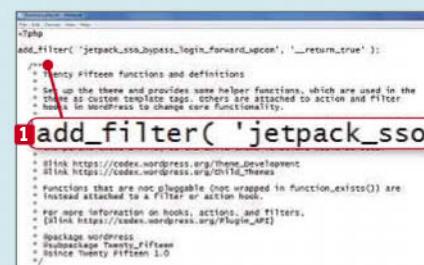
WordPress can be vulnerable to 'brute force' attacks, in which hackers enter thousands of possible passwords into a site's login page. To eliminate this risk, use WordPress.com's two-step system instead



1 If you don't have a WordPress.com account, create one. You may need to set up a dummy blog. Go to bit.ly/twostep384 and click Get Started. **1** You'll need to use your mobile phone to set up a secondary login, which can use text messages or an app.



2 If you don't already have the Jetpack plugin on your blog, go to your dashboard and click Plugins, **1** Add New. Search and install Jetpack. Click Jetpack in the menu, **2** activate the Single Sign On switch and tick 'Require Two-Step Authentication'. **3** Click Save Changes. **4** Log into your site with FTP software, such as FileZilla (filezilla-project.org).



3 Go to the folder for your current theme and download the functions.php file. Open it in Notepad and, anywhere after the first line, add: `add_filter('jetpack_sso_bypass_login_forward_wpcom', '_return_true');` **1** Save it and send it back to your web server so it overwrites the old version.

WebUser

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Great stuff, now I can clear my stack of old mags without loss of info Colinz 

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*at time of press



Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

Windows 10 laptops under £250

You can get a brand new Windows 10 computer without spending a fortune. Here, we've tested six affordable options

It's logical to assume that a new Windows 10 laptop is going to cost a lot of money, yet this isn't necessarily the case. Several manufacturers are making cheap laptops, costing less than £250, that are perfectly capable of running Microsoft's latest operating system. That said, a low price will always involve a compromise - none of these machines could be described as powerhouses, and they are limited to browsing the web and running simple applications. However, they are ideal for use as a secondary, portable PC. It takes a while for a new operating system to filter through, so all the models we reviewed come with Windows 8.1 pre-installed. However, we tested all of them having first performed the free Windows 10 upgrade.

Asus EeeBook X205TA | £149.99 | www.pcworld.co.uk

FEATURES ★★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★★☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★☆

The Asus EeeBook X205TA is a netbook-style laptop with a great build quality and battery life, and comes with a free one-year subscription to Office 365. However, the Office offer is only available from certain retailers (including our pick of PC World), so select your supplier carefully if you're shopping online and want to take advantage of the deal.

At 980g, it's the lightest laptop in this Group Test but it still feels reassuringly sturdy and well built. It has two USB 2 ports but no USB 3, which is disappointing, though it has Bluetooth and 802.11n Wi-Fi. There's also a microSD card slot and a Micro HDMI port for hooking up the laptop to an external monitor.

The 11.6in, 1,366 x 768 pixels screen was only able to display 54.7 per cent of the colours using the sRGB colour range, and we measured a contrast ratio of 437:1, which isn't great. However, the keyboard is surprisingly capable. The keys don't have a lot of 'travel' (they are flat, rather than raised, which is less comfortable for touch typing), but they're light and responsive. The touchpad is also good and works well with Windows' multi-fingered gestures.

These small, cheap laptops aren't designed to run the latest games or perform complicated tasks such as video editing, and our test results

bore this out, with the X205TA managing an overall score of 9 points in our benchmark test. But it runs basic apps such as an office suite and web browser without any problems and boots quickly, getting Windows up and running in 15 seconds. The downside of the small SSD (solid-state drive), however, is that you end up having to store files on other devices.

The X205TA runs completely silently, thanks to its fanless design, and we didn't notice it getting uncomfortably warm during our tests. This proved good for its battery life, too, lasting 8 hours and 47 minutes in our battery test.

HOW WE TESTED

We put all the laptops through their paces using our Windows benchmark suite, which gives an overall score based on a series of tests including office tasks, image editing and video encoding. We also tested each laptop's battery, timing how long it took to drain completely from a full charge.

VERDICT
★★★★☆

It's impressive that Asus has made such a capable laptop that costs so little. If you're happy to save your work to the cloud and don't mind paying £60 per year for Office 365 after the first free year, the Asus EeeBook is a terrific buy. Some compromises have been made to get to this price, however, and you might find it a bit small and cramped, simply because it's been squeezed into such a tiny case.



HP Pavilion x2 | £199.97 |

www.pcworld.co.uk

FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

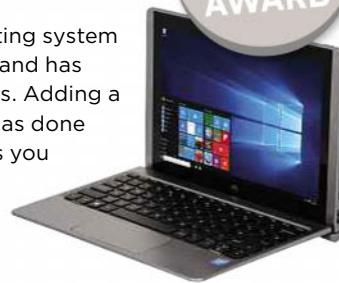
Windows 10 is a better operating system for tablets than Windows 8.1, and has improved support for gestures. Adding a detachable keyboard, as HP has done with this Pavilion model, gives you the best of both worlds because you can use it as either a tablet or a laptop.

The tablet offers similar performance to the Gold Award-winning Asus, scoring 9 in our Windows benchmark test, which is no surprise because the underlying specifications are very similar. The Pavilion's screen is touch sensitive but smaller, at 10.9in, and has a lesser resolution of 1,280 x 800 pixels. The device is also surprisingly capable as a laptop, with a good quality keyboard and decent trackpad. The only problem is the relatively low-res screen, which means you can only really run one application at a time before everything gets too cramped.

VERDICT



This is a good Windows 10 machine that operates both as a laptop and a tablet, and is powerful enough to run basic applications. The battery life is a bit disappointing and the screen is on the small side, but otherwise it's a great buy.



WebUser
SILVER
AWARD

Toshiba Satellite Click Mini | £199.95

www.johnlewis.com | ★★★★★

The Click Mini's screen is just 8.9in but the bezel around it is wide, so the keyboard isn't as cramped as you might think. The detachable keyboard module has a second battery, but this still left it with the worst battery life of all the laptops we tested, lasting just 6 hours and 38 minutes. It's not a bad performer, though, scoring 9 points in our Windows performance tests, which is as good as our top award-winners.

Acer Aspire Switch 10E | £249

www.staples.co.uk | ★★★★★

The connection that fixes the keyboard to the screen in this hybrid tablet and laptop feels less sturdy than other similar units in this Group Test. It scored 9 in our Windows performance tests, though, which ranks with the best here, and was second only to the Toshiba C40-C in our battery tests. However, that's not enough to justify its higher price.



Acer Aspire R11 (R3-131T) | £242.97

www.saveonlaptops.co.uk | ★★★★★

This laptop was the only one in our tests to come with a proper 500GB hard drive, but the extra storage capacity makes it comparatively slow to boot. The touchpad suffered from driver problems after upgrading to Windows 10, and it scored a disappointing 7 in our Windows benchmark test. Even worse, it only came fourth in the battery-life test, with 8 hours and 26 minutes on the clock.



Toshiba Satellite C40-C | £199.99 |

www.coopelectricalshop.co.uk

FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

If you find the screens on our Gold and Silver Award-winners too small, then you might prefer the Toshiba Satellite C40-C's impressively sized 14in display. The resolution still only matches that of the smaller Asus at 1,366 x 768 pixels, but it's a better quality screen. The Satellite C40-C had the best battery life of all the laptops we tested, lasting 11 hours and 25 minutes. This is partly down to its more efficient, low-powered processor - a dual-core Intel Celeron - but the downside is it didn't do as well as the Asus and HP in our performance tests, putting in an overall Windows performance score of 7 points.

There are plenty of ports for plugging in peripherals and an SD card slot if you struggle to keep within the 10GB of space you'll have left after Windows 10 has claimed its share. However, there's no Ethernet port, so you'll have to stick with its 802.11n Wi-Fi for networking.



WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD

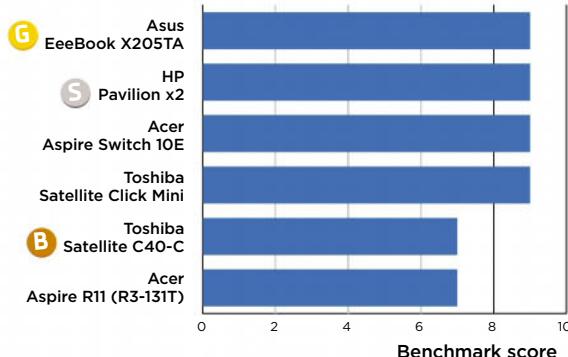
VERDICT



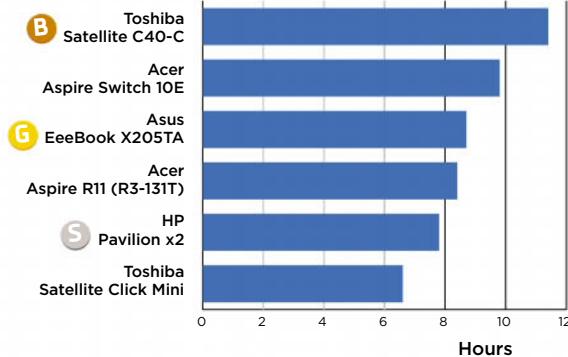
The C40-C didn't perform as well as our top two laptops, but it has a bigger screen which provides the whole device, including the keyboard, with more room. While this means it's heavier and bulkier, it's also more comfortable to work on.

TEST-RESULTS CHARTS

Overall Windows performance



Battery life





Group Test Windows 10 laptops

						
WEBSITE	www.asus.com	www.hp.com	www.toshiba.co.uk	www.toshiba.co.uk	www.acer.co.uk	www.acer.co.uk
PRICE	£149.99	£199.97	£199.99	£199.95	£249	£242.97
BUY FROM	www.pcworld.co.uk	www.pcworld.co.uk	www.coopelectricalshop.co.uk	www.johnlewis.com	www.staples.co.uk	www.saveonlaptops.co.uk
PROCESSOR	Quad-core 1.33GHz Intel Atom Z3735F	Quad-core 1.33GHz Intel Atom Z3736F	Dual-core 1.6GHz Intel Celeron N3050	Quad-core 1.33GHz Intel Atom Z3735F	Quad-core 1.33GHz Intel Atom Z3735F	Dual-core 1.6GHz Intel Celeron N3050
MEMORY	2GB	2GB	2GB	2GB	2GB	2GB
SCREEN SIZE	11.6in	10.1in	14in	8.9in	10.1in	11.1in
SCREEN RESOLUTION	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,280 x 800 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,920 x 1,200 pixels	1,280 x 800 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels
TOUCHSCREEN	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
STORAGE	32GB eMMC	32GB eMMC	32GB eMMC	32GB eMMC	32GB eMMC	500GB hard drive
USB PORTS	2 x USB 2	1x USB 3, 1x USB Type-C	1x USB 3, 2 x USB 2	1x USB 2, 1x Micro USB	1x USB 2	1x USB 3, 1x USB 2
NETWORKING	802.11n Wi-Fi	802.11n Wi-Fi	802.11n Wi-Fi	802.11n Wi-Fi	802.11n Wi-Fi	802.11ac Wi-Fi, Gigabit Ethernet
MEMORY-CARD READER	MicroSD	MicroSD	SD	SD	MicroSD	SD
OPERATING SYSTEM	Windows 8.1 32-bit (free upgrade to Windows 10)	Windows 8.1 32-bit (free upgrade to Windows 10)	Windows 8.1 64-bit (free upgrade to Windows 10)	Windows 8.1 32-bit (free upgrade to Windows 10)	Windows 8.1 32-bit (free upgrade to Windows 10)	Windows 8.1 32-bit (free upgrade to Windows 10)
SIZE	286 x 193 x 18mm	264 x 173 x 20mm	344 x 244 x 23mm	235 x 161 x 10mm	262 x 180 x 23mm	298 x 211 x 21mm
WEIGHT	980g	1.2kg	1.7kg	1kg	1.2kg	1.6kg
WARRANTY	One-year collect-and-return	One-year collect-and-return	One-year return-to-base	One-year return-to-base	One-year return-to-base	One-year return-to-base

OUR VERDICT

If you're looking for a Windows 10 laptop that's a similar price to a Chromebook or netbook, these laptops and convertable tablets fit the bill. We gave our Gold Award to the Asus EeeBook X205TA, which is a bargain for less than £150. It's small but runs surprisingly well for its size and price.

Our Silver Award goes to the HP Pavilion x2, a versatile Windows 10 tablet with a detachable keyboard that turns it into a laptop. It's more than powerful enough to run basic applications.

Both these options are on the small side, so if you want something that's larger and more comfortable to work on, try our Bronze Award-winning Toshiba Satellite C40-C. Its bigger screen is housed in a generous case, with more room for the keyboard, but this makes it heavier than the rest. ■





Web User's Best Buys

Web User and its sister titles test over 2,500 products every year

HARDWARE

WINDOWS 10 LAPTOP

Asus EeeBook X205TA

£149.99 from www.pcworld.co.uk

Date tested: October 2015



The Asus EeeBook X205TA is a netbook-style laptop with a great build quality and battery life. The price is terrific, too, but you might find it a bit small and cramped because it's been squeezed into such a tiny case.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 1.33GHz Intel Atom Z3735F processor ■ 2GB of memory ■ 32GB eMMC storage ■ 11.6in non-touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 2 x USB 2 ports ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 286 x 193 x 18mm ■ 980g ■ One-year collect and return

MULTI-DEVICE CHARGER

Griffin PowerDock 5

£79.95 from www.johnlewis.com

Date tested: September 2015



Griffin's PowerDock 5 lets you charge a whole household's worth of mobile devices at one time, supplying plenty of power across all five of its USB ports. It doesn't matter whether you've got five tablets or five phones, they'll all sit nicely in this dock, although you'll need to make sure that the cables don't get tangled.

KEY SPECS

Supports five USB devices ■ 2.1A output on each port ■ 200 x 130 x 80mm ■ 340g

WI-FI EXTENDER

Netgear Nighthawk AC1900 Extender

£130 from www.broadbandbuyer.co.uk

Date tested: July 2015



The Netgear Nighthawk is pricey, but it's also fast, powerful and built to last. Its advanced tools will be compatible with future Wi-Fi standards and it provides excellent performance.

KEY SPECS

AC1900 Wi-Fi ■ Dual-band ■ 5 x Gigabit Ethernet ports ■ USB 3 ■ WPA and WPA2 security ■ DLNA server ■ 252 x 174 x 31mm ■ Two-years return-to-base warranty

SMARTWATCH

LG Watch Urbane

£224 from www.amazon.co.uk

Date tested: November 2015



The LG Watch Urbane looks good, is simple to operate and has a great screen (if you stay out of direct sunlight). It doesn't have the full range of fitness tools, but it's ideal as a smartphone companion. It won't pair with an iPhone, though.

KEY SPECS

Android Wear 5.1 ■ Gorilla Glass 3 ■ 1.3in circular display ■ 320 x 320-pixels resolution ■ 512MB memory ■ 4GB storage ■ Bluetooth ■ 52 x 46 x 11mm ■ 67g ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

WINDOWS 10 PC

PC Specialist Evora



£559 from www.pc specialist.co.uk

Date tested: September 2015

This is more of a workaday PC than an all-out powerhouse, but it's cheaper than other Windows 10 PCs and its impressive gaming performance gives it lots of potential as an all-round family computer.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 3.2GHz Intel Core i5-4460 processor ■ 8GB of memory ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 120GB SSD ■ 2 x USB 3, 6 x USB 2 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet ■ 477 x 450 x 190mm ■ Three-years return-to-base warranty including one-year parts

MULTIROOM SPEAKER

Sonos Play:1



£169 from www.currys.co.uk

Date tested: March 2015

The Sonos Play:1 offers impressive audio quality and comes with excellent software and great apps that provide seamless integration with music services. It's the ideal speaker to use as a starting point for a home entertainment system.

KEY SPECS

2 x speakers ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi, 1 x 10/100 Ethernet ■ Android and iOS apps ■ Compatible with UPnP and SMB servers ■ AAC, FLAC, MP3, OGG and WAV ■ 161 x 12 x 12mm ■ 1.8kg



SSD

Samsung 850 Pro 256GB

£136.03 from www.kikatek.com

Date tested: February 2015

The Samsung 850 Pro is crammed with new technology that makes it faster and more durable than its competitors. You could buy a similarly sized SSD for much less, but in our tests the cheaper models weren't as fast and they don't come with the 850 Pro's generous 10-year warranty.



KEY SPECS

256GB (also available in 128GB, 512GB & 1TB) ■ 53p per GB ■ SATA III interface ■ 2.5in drive case ■ 10-year warranty ■ 100 x 70 x 7mm ■ 66g

WINDOWS 8.1 LAPTOP

Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA

£449.95 from www.johnlewis.com

Date tested: January 2015



This touchscreen laptop folds over into a chunky tablet. It's well built, did well in our performance tests and has a fantastic battery life.

KEY SPECS

Dual-core 1.9GHz Intel Core i3-4030U processor ■ 4GB of memory ■ 13.3in touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 500GB hard drive ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ 326 x 232 x 22mm ■ 1.75kg ■ One-year collect-and-return warranty

DESKTOP PC

Chillblast Fusion Obelisk

£699.98 from www.chillblast.com

Date tested: November 2014



This great all-round desktop PC achieved a good overall performance in both our Windows and gaming tests. It runs quietly, has a good-quality monitor and is packed with great components, including a fast SSD and a generous hard drive.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 4.2GHz Intel Core i5-4690K processor (overclocked) ■ 8GB of memory ■ 5 x USB3, 5 x USB2 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet ■ 120GB SSD ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ Windows 8.1 ■ 465 x 430 x 192mm

TABLET

Google Nexus 9

£319 from play.google.com

Date tested: February 2015

The Nexus 9 is our favourite Android tablet. It has a fantastic screen – even better than the iPad Air 2's – and superb battery life, lasting over 15 hours in our tests. It's cheaper than the latest iPad and comes in 16GB and 32GB capacities.



KEY SPECS

8.9in screen ■ 2,048 x 1,536 pixels resolution ■ Dual-core 2.3GHz 64-bit Nvidia Tegra K1 Denver processor ■ 16/32GB storage ■ 4G option costs £60 extra (32GB models only) ■ Android 5.0 ■ 228 x 154 x 8mm ■ 425g

WIRELESS ROUTER

D-Link DIR-868L

£65.97 from www.dabs.com

Date tested: December 2014



If you're willing to switch your wireless devices to the 5GHz network, the D-Link DIR-868L offers fast and reliable performance at a great price. It's simple to set up and provides a handy wizard to guide you through the process.

KEY SPECS

Dual-band 2.4GHz and 5GHz ■ 802.11b/g/n ■ 1,300Mbps theoretical maximum speed ■ 6 x internal antennas ■ 4 x 10/100/1000Mbps Ethernet ports ■ WPA and WPA2 encryption ■ 1 x USB 3 port ■ 217 x 123 x 102mm ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

KEYBOARD

Cherry MX-Board 3.0

£55 from www.kikatek.com

Date tested: November 2014



The Cherry MX-Board 3.0 is a hard-wearing mechanical keyboard that's a pleasure to type on. It's quiet for a mechanical model but still makes more noise than a standard keyboard. It doesn't have a lot of features, but it's ideal if you're looking for a standard, good-quality keyboard.

KEY SPECS

104 keys ■ 1 x USB port ■ 1.8m detachable cable ■ 2 non-slip surfaces ■ 2 rubber caps for adjustable feet ■ 44.6 x 15.8 x 2.8cm ■ 0.83kg ■ Win-Key lock

SOFTWARE & SERVICES

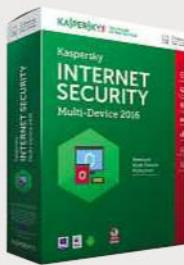
INTERNET SECURITY

Kaspersky Internet Security 2016

£19.99 from bit.ly/kaspooffer2016

Date tested: June 2015

Kaspersky Internet Security performed near-perfectly throughout our tests last year, with only one unwanted program slipping through. Our sister title *Computeractive* is selling it at the reader-offer price of £19.99 (full price £39.99). Click the link above.



KEY FEATURES

- Anti-virus and firewall tools
- Protects online shopping and banking
- Identity and privacy tools
- Dangerous-website alerts
- Advanced parental control
- Licences for one, three and five PCs; for one or two years, or pay monthly
- Multi-Device version
- Compatible with Windows 10

PHOTO EDITING

Adobe Photoshop Elements 13

£81.08 from

www.adobe.com/uk

Date tested: December 2014



With its tidy interface and pop-out trays, Adobe Photoshop Elements provides everything an amateur photographer needs and helps you quickly find the right editing tools.

KEY FEATURES

- Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8+ (32- and 64-bit)
- Bundled photo organiser
- Content-aware edits
- Guided edits
- People-beautifier tools
- RAW support

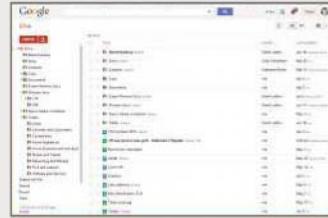
ONLINE STORAGE

Google Drive

From free from drive.google.com

Date tested: August 2014

Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software integrates with Explorer, so saving and syncing files is like keeping them in any other PC folder.



KEY FEATURES

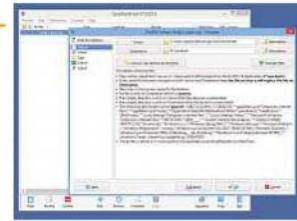
- 15GB free storage
- Web-based office software
- Works with Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8+
- Chrome browser add-on
- Android and iOS apps
- 100GB extra storage for £1.19 per month; 1TB for £5.97 per month; 10TB for £59.51 per month

BACKUP AND SYNC

SyncBackFree

Free from bit.ly/syncback366

Date tested: March 2015



SyncBackFree is very capable software that gives you plenty of control over how it can be used. If you know what you need from your backups and you're prepared to spend some time configuring the options, SyncBackFree has everything you need.

KEY FEATURES

- Synchronise: Copy files in both directions
- Restore back-up files easily
- Email logs
- Schedule backups
- Simple and Advanced mode
- Runs on Windows 8, 7, Vista, and XP
- Extensive Help documentation and support

VIDEO EDITING

Adobe Premiere Elements 13

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk

Date tested: December 2014

Premiere Elements 13's superb interface makes its many features neat but accessible. You won't find better video-editing software for the price.



KEY FEATURES

- Automatic editing
- Export to multiple video formats
- Burn to DVD and Blu-ray
- Image stabiliser
- Stop-motion capture
- Motion tracking
- Musical scores and sound effects
- Upload to YouTube and Vimeo

ONLINE SITE BUILDER

Weebly

From free from www.weebly.com

Date tested: May 2014

Weebly's drag-and-drop interface makes it extremely easy to use. Its templates are a little restrictive, but there are still plenty of options to choose from and the results look great. It also has free Android and iOS apps.



KEY FEATURES

- 115 templates
- Unlimited storage
- SEO tools
- Meta tags
- Password protection
- E-commerce tools
- Ad-free Starter edition
- Android and iOS apps
- RSS
- Site stats



Best Free Software

UNINSTALLER

Ashampoo Uninstaller 5

bit.ly/ashampoo384

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8/+10

File size: 21.3MB

We usually only feature the latest and greatest free software in this section, but Ashampoo Uninstaller is an interesting exception. It's pretty old (the last major update was in 2012), but we have good reason for bringing it to your attention in this issue because, previously, this powerful program cost £29.99, but Ashampoo has now taken the welcome step of making it available for free.

Don't be put off by the age of



Ashampoo Uninstaller 5. There have been several, minor tweaks made to it over time (the most recent was in August 2015) and it's fully compatible with all versions of Microsoft's operating system, including Windows 10.

Although Windows' built-in uninstaller does a good job of removing unwanted applications, Ashampoo's alternative is a far more versatile solution. It automatically monitors system changes during program installations, so when you come to uninstall software, it does so very cleanly, removing orphaned

files, Registry entries and other leftover items.

Additionally, the program offers a selection of other maintenance tools including a drive cleaner, Registry optimiser, internet cleaner, disk-defrag tool, startup tuner, font manager, System Restore manager, file wiper, undelete, link checker, duplicate file finder and more.

You need to request a free licence key during the installation process, but this is easy enough to do and only requires an email address.



MINI WORKSHOP | Remove unwanted programs using Ashampoo Uninstaller 5



1 The first time you run Ashampoo Uninstaller, you'll be given the choice of one of three interface styles – Corky Pinboard, Dark or Default. The top menu offers four main options – Uninstall, **1** Install **2** (which will monitor a program installation), Tools **3** and Monitoring. **4** Flick this last switch to 'On' to automatically monitor all future software installations.



2 Click Uninstall in the main menu or go to the Installations tab. **1** You'll see a list of all of the programs currently installed on your PC, **2** although you should be aware that this doesn't include any Windows 8 or 10 apps. Selecting an item lets you uninstall it **3** or delete its entry from the list. **4** The list also displays whether or not the installation was logged. **5**



3 Click the Tools tab **1** and browse the categories on the left **2** to find a tool you want to run. Hover your mouse over an entry to find out more about what it does. **3** When you select a tool, it will open in the program window. You can customise the software by clicking the Options link in the top-right corner. **4**

This fortnight's top new software downloads to help you make the most of your PC, and they're all FREE



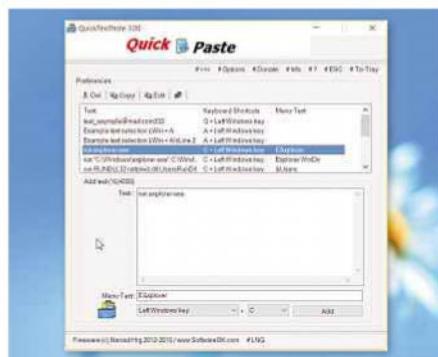
EXTRACTION TOOL

Free RAR Extract Frog 7

bit.ly/rarfrog384

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 1.1MB

Although ZIP is by far the most common compression format, RAR files, created using WinRAR, are very popular on the web. WinRAR is a paid-for program, but Free RAR Extract Frog can extract files stored in standard RARs and split archives, and even decompress password-protected files. You can change the look of the program by dragging an image onto the frog picture to apply it as a skin. The main downside is that the program can't create its own new RAR files.



CLIPBOARD TOOL

QuickTextPaste

www.softwareok.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 56KB

This tiny program lets you use keyboard shortcuts to quickly paste any pre-defined text into a Windows application, run commands and launch programs. You can customise any of the options and create your own by entering some text, then choosing the desired keyboard combinations from the drop-down menus. You can also adjust the size of the text box and decide how the program should open.



MOUSE TOOL

Border-Less Unlimited Mouse

www.mosrille.ml

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 13.3KB

Even smaller than QuickTextPaste (see left), this portable application changes your mouse's behaviour and lets the cursor wrap around the screen. Move the pointer to the far right-hand side and it will appear on the left; drag it above the top and it will appear at the bottom; and so on. You can use the System Tray icon to enable or disable the screen edges (to prevent the cursor going beyond the left-hand side, for example).

New Windows Apps

Try Windows 10

bit.ly/trywin10-384

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 56.6MB

This is a useful app for Windows 10 novices that offers video guides for tasks such as installing apps, managing photos, sharing content, using Cortana and more.



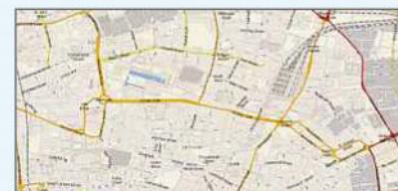
MapFactor GPS Navigation

bit.ly/mapfactor384

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 6.2MB (plus maps)

This universal app for PCs, tablets and Windows phones is a turn-by-turn navigation tool that uses OpenStreetMaps data. Maps are downloaded on to your device so you can access them without an internet connection.



Trivial Pursuit & Friends

bit.ly/triv384

Min requirements: Windows 8+/10

File size: 70MB

This revamped, social version of the popular trivia game lets you go head-to-head with friends or challenge strangers. Questions are tailored to the country you are playing in.



SYSTEM TOOL

FixWin 10

bit.ly/fixwin384

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 103KB

Repairing problems with Microsoft's operating system can sometimes be difficult, especially if you're not sure what you're doing. The portable program FixWin can solve more than 50 common problems and annoyances in different versions of Windows. There are three versions of the tool available: v1.2 for Windows 7/Vista; v2.2 for Windows 8+; and now, v10 for Windows 10. This new release has an updated user interface and a new section that repairs problems with the Settings app, fixes a malfunctioning Start menu, gets the Store working again and more. Click the question-mark button to find out what an option does, then click Fix to apply it.

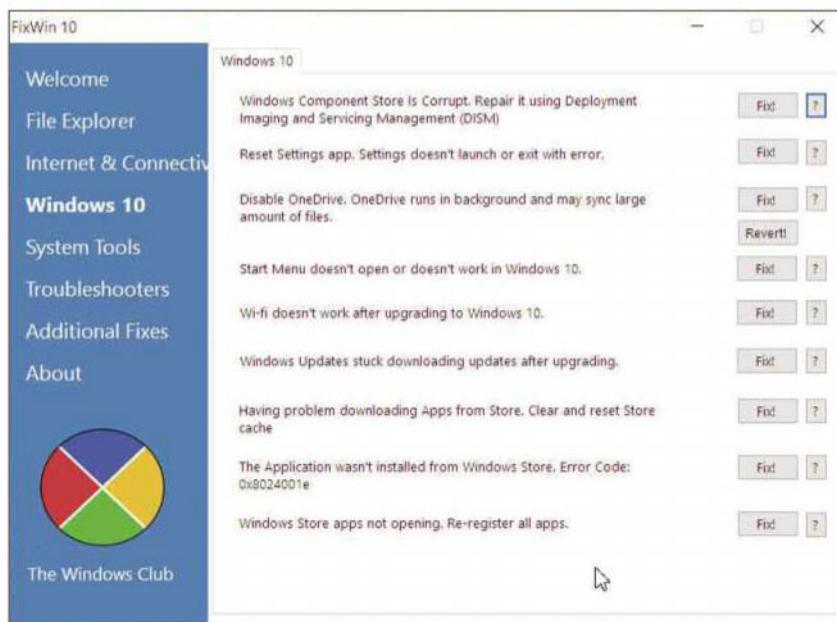


IMAGE EDITOR

Zoner Photo Studio Free 18

free.zoner.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 65.8MB

This free photo manager, viewer and editor offers an impressive selection of features, including some excellent effects and filters, support for a second monitor and the ability to post images directly to sites such as Facebook and Twitter. You will need to sign up for a free account before you can use it, and the first time you run the software, a wizard will guide you through the various features to get you started.

The latest version of the software is more intuitive to use and includes a standalone viewer, an HD video creator and the ability to edit photos without making changes to the original.

PARENTAL CONTROLS

Kaspersky Safe Kids Free

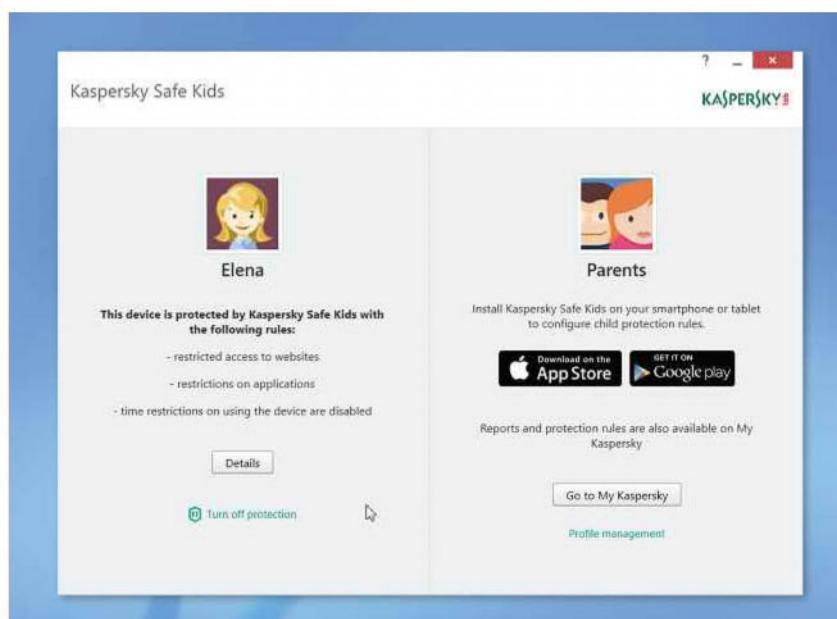
www.kaspersky.com/safe-kids

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8+/10 or Mac OS X **File size:** 33.6MB

Protecting your children from the more unsavoury aspects of the web can be tricky, but this is where parental-control software can help. Kaspersky's new tool works on PC, Mac, Android, iPhone and iPad, and is controlled via a central account. All you need to do is sign up to My Kaspersky (it's free), then enter the name and age of your children. You can choose one of the cartoon profile pictures provided by the software or supply your own photos.

The software blocks access to unsuitable websites, lets you limit usage time to specific hours of the day and provides reports about what your children get up to online.



 **Don't install...**

Iris

iristech.co

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8/10,
Mac OS X

File size: 47MB

Iris certainly means well, promising to protect your eyes, help you sleep better and be healthier and more productive, but we're not convinced it's worth paying \$10 (£6.54) a month for. Essentially, all Iris does is remind you to take regular screen breaks and adjust the brightness of your monitor, which other tools do for free. At 47MB, it's also rather hefty.



 **...Install this instead**

F.lux

justgetflux.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8/10,
Mac OS X or Linux

File size: 584KB

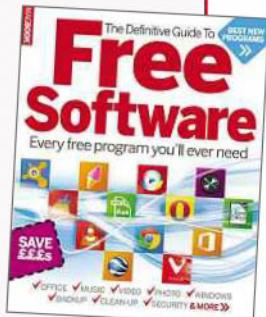
Staring at a computer screen, especially at night, can lead to sore, dry eyes, headaches and insomnia. F.lux makes your monitor kinder on your peepers by adjusting your display settings to match your environment and the time of day. Your screen will be at its brightest during daylight hours, gradually dimming and taking on a warmer, yellow hue as night falls. F.lux also has a Movie mode that soothes your vision while you're watching films, and can be disabled for an hour while you carry out colour-sensitive work. It offers handy hotkeys to quickly control your display from your keyboard.



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SYSTEM CLEANER

CCleaner 5.11

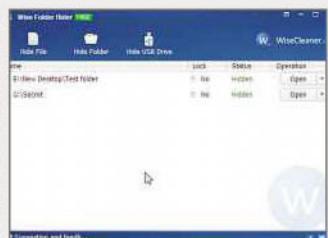
www.piriform.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 6.4MB

The hugely popular system-cleaning tool gets updated on a monthly basis. This latest version can uninstall Windows Store apps (Windows 8, 8.1 and 10); has improved cleaning of Chrome's download history; and optimises the Start-up Items detection routine.



FOLDER HIDER

Wise Folder Hider Free 3.24

www.wisecleaner.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 1.8MB

If you want to keep a file, folder or USB drive private, Wise Folder Hider Free can help. This newest edition adds support for Tablet mode in Windows 10. It also introduces improvements to the interface and usability of the program, and updates various translations.



ASTRONOMY SOFTWARE

Stellarium 0.14

stellarium.org

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 153MB

Stellarium is an open source Desktop planetarium that lets you explore the heavens from a set viewpoint on Earth (or beyond). This new build improves astronomical accuracy for historical applications and adds a greatly improved collection of DSO (Deep Space Object) data.



SYSTEM RECOVERY

Lazesoft Recovery Suite Home Edition 4.1

www.lazesoft.com

Min requirements:

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

File size: 29.9MB

This software can solve boot and crash problems, recover deleted data, reset a Windows password and create a bootable recovery CD or USB flash drive. This version adds support for Windows 10, and can install Windows 8, 8.1 and 10 onto a USB drive. ■

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18 November - 1 December 2015 **29**



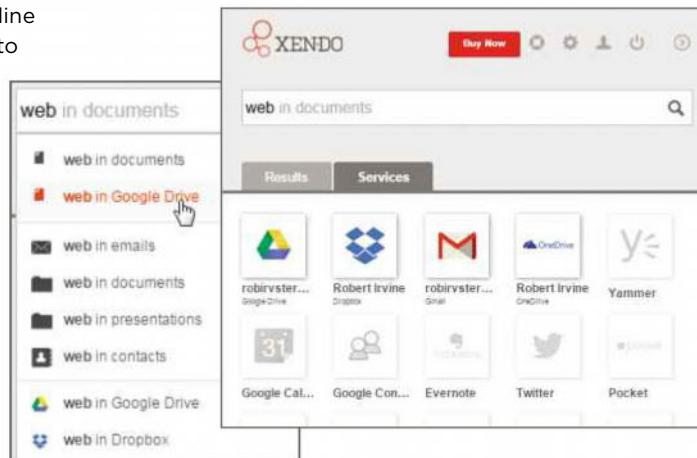
Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

Search all your online accounts at once

Nowadays, there are so many places to store your files online that it's easy to forget exactly what you've uploaded and to which service. You can keep track of all your cloud content using Xendo (bit.ly/xendo384), which lets you search multiple accounts simultaneously to find a file in seconds. To use Xendo, first install the Chrome extension, then sign up for a free account; you don't need to enter your credit card details, but if you want to search more than the last 30 days of uploads, you'll need to pay \$9 (£5.87) per month. Once this is done, choose which services to connect to Xendo from options including Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive, Pocket and Evernote; and it will index them straight away. You can then click the toolbar button and start typing a keyword to view matching results below. It's a very useful tool and has no direct access to your actual files.



Learn the meaning of unfamiliar words

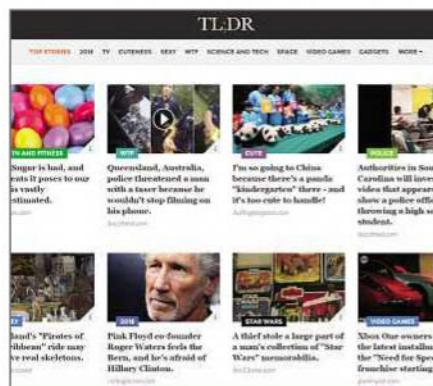
We've always liked the word 'nifty' so we were excited to discover that there's a new Chrome extension called Nifty – the tiny language explorer (bit.ly/nifty384). What's more, Nifty is designed to educate and enlighten you about the exact meaning of words you're not sure of. When you encounter a word or phrase on a web page that you don't recognise or understand, you can



right-click it to look it up using one of the options in Nifty's side menu. These include Urban Dictionary for slang terms; Google Translate for foreign words; and Stack Overflow for technical terminology. You can also search for the word on Reddit and Twitter, to see it used in context, and get a detailed definition and explanation from Wikipedia. Alternatively, you can choose Open All for an information overload from all sources in separate tabs. It's Nifty by name, nifty by nature!

View news headlines on your New Tab page

If you like to stay abreast of the news but you don't have time to browse individual sites, check out TLDR: New Tab News Right Now (bit.ly/tldr384). This handy add-on gathers headlines from across the web and presents them on your New Tab page, so you can instantly dip into any stories that pique your interest. The beauty is that articles don't simply appear in a random list, but are accompanied by photos, videos and animated GIFs, and are organised into relevant categories. These include 'Science and Tech', Gadgets and 2016, as well as a few 'esoteric' sections and a Top Stories page of the most popular content. Although TLDR (which stands for 'too long, didn't read') draws heavily on US sources, we saw plenty of articles from UK newspapers, including the



Guardian, Mirror and Daily Mail. It's just a shame you can't choose which sites to include.

Remove the Kardashians from the web

There have been lots of add-ons this year that replace specific, overused words and names on the web with



something less annoying, or else block them altogether, so we're not surprised to see one called The Kardashian Filter (bit.ly/kard384). As you can probably guess, this extension strips all mentions and photos of the ubiquitous Kardashian family from pages – including Kim, Khloe and Kourtney, their mother Kris Jenner and their estranged step-parent Caitlyn (formerly Bruce) Jenner. We tested it on the Mail Online homepage and no less than 101 Kardashian references were removed. Bliss!

This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more



Firefox

Create fake identities on the fly

Don't you hate it when websites insist on you providing your name and email address, even though you might never visit that site again? One way around this is to use the brilliant website [Fake Name Generator](http://www.fakenamegenerator.com) (www.fakenamegenerator.com), which is now also available as a Firefox add-on (bit.ly/fakename384). When you register with a site and need some bogus details, click the 'F' toolbar button and choose the desired gender and nationality of your fake identity. Click Generate to create your fictional alter ego, then scroll down to view your new name, email address, phone number, date of birth and other, less essential info including your height, weight, blood type and favourite colour. We are now 29-year old Edward Cameron from Mount Pleasant – pleased to meet you!



Set a custom page as your New Tab page

Firefox 41, the latest version of the browser, removes the option to display a favourite web page when you open a new tab. Fortunately, you can get it back by installing New Tab Override (bit.ly/override384), which lets you view the URL you want on your New Tab page, rather than the standard set of thumbnails. Simply go into the add-on's Options and type the web address of the page you want to use into the URL field. When you now open a new tab, your favourite page will be displayed. To revert to the standard New Tab layout, type about: newtab into the box.



Restore the old Google logo

Never one to obey the maxim 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it', Google recently redesigned its logo, but it's not to everyone's taste. To change it back, install Google Logo Restorer (bit.ly/).

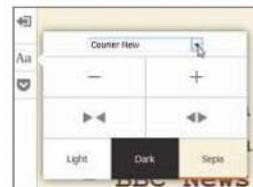


logo384) and, when you visit www.google.co.uk, search in your browser or access Google from your bookmarks menu or tab bar, you'll see that the familiar old logo has returned. We noticed a split-second delay when the change is applied, but we can confirm that it definitely works.

Customise Firefox's Reader View

One of Firefox's best recent additions is Reader View, which strips ads, images and other surplus content from articles on compatible websites (BBC News is one) to make them easier to read and faster to print. Better Reader (bit.ly/better384) enhances the feature by letting you also change the font of the text on the page, and make the article wider or narrower. Switch to Reader View by clicking the 'open book' icon in the

address bar, then use the controls on the left-hand side to adjust the font style and size; switch between a light, dark or sepia background; and stretch or condense the text.



OTHER BROWSERS



Download videos from Facebook

Much of the time, the videos people share on Facebook aren't half as amusing or interesting as the poster thinks they are, but occasionally you'll see a gem that you might like to keep. Facebook Video Downloader is a new add-on for Opera (bit.ly/operavideo384) and Chrome (bit.ly/chromevideo384) that does exactly what it says on the tin, letting you grab any clip you want from the social network. Just hover your mouse over the top-right corner and click either the SD or HD button to download the video in standard or high definition.



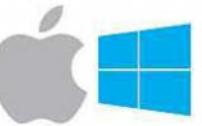
Try the latest version of Vivaldi

"Good things come to those who wait" seems to be the motto of the developers behind the Vivaldi browser (vivaldi.com), which launched at the beginning of the year and has only now reached its first official beta version. This fixes several bugs and provides full support for extensions and private browsing, while tweaking the design and adding options that make the browser smoother and faster to use. It's definitely worth a look if you fancy a fast alternative to Chrome and Firefox.





Best Free Apps



App of the Fortnight

SECURITY

Perch

bit.ly/perch384

Min requirements: Android 4.1

Size: 9.1MB

If you're considering buying a home-security camera, this app could save you a lot of money. Install Perch on an old Android phone or tablet (connected to both a power source and a Wi-Fi network) and you can turn the device into a fully functional security camera without needing any further accessories. The app is still in beta but it's completely free to use, and setting up a security camera (you can also use a PC webcam) takes only a few moments.

Once your device is connected, you can see what's going on at home simply by opening Perch on your primary device or by logging in at getperch.com. The website lets you view past events on a timeline and you can also access a range of advanced options, such as setting a recording schedule and adding custom motion-detection zones.

It's a really clever concept, whether you're only interested in seeing what the dog gets up to while you're out or you

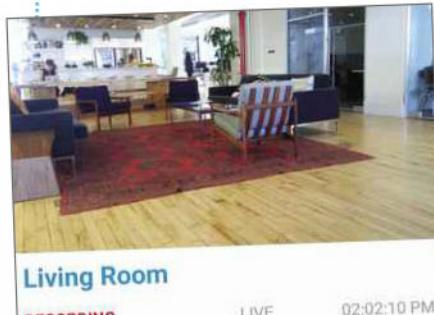
want reassurance that your home hasn't been broken into while you're away on holiday.

One caveat, however, is that we found the app's motion-detection notification emails were a little slow to arrive, so if you want to guarantee that

you'll receive prompt alerts of unexpected activity in your home, we'd recommend using a purpose-built security camera such as Y-Cam's HomeMonitor HD (bit.ly/ycam384).

Perch's video playback can sometimes be a little temperamental, too.

NEW



Living Room

RECORDING

LIVE

02:02:10 PM



Our rating



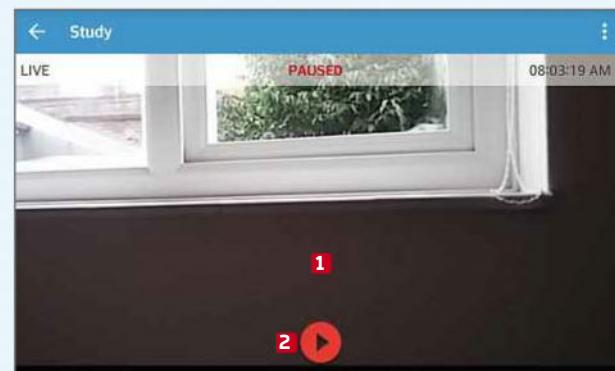
MINI WORKSHOP

Use your phone as a security camera

1 Install and run Perch, then tap Sign Up to set up an account. Enter an email address 1 and password, 2 then select Sign Up 3 to complete the process. Make sure your Android device is connected to a Wi-Fi network and a power source.



2 Choose a name 1 to describe your camera and tap On or Off 2 to determine whether Audio Recording is activated (you can change this later). After tapping Finish, 3 Perch shows the view from your camera's viewfinder.



3 Tap the menu button to change the audio settings or to activate your device's front camera. Rotate the device to a horizontal position to maximise the viewing area 1 and tap the record button 2 to start recording.

This fortnight's top free and paid-for apps for Android, iOS and Windows phones and tablets, and smart TVs

TOOL

KnockOn

bit.ly/knockon384

Min requirements:

Android 4.1

Size: 545k

Formerly exclusive to LG smartphones, 'Knock On' is a feature that lets you wake or lock your device simply by double-tapping its screen. This new app makes this possible on non-LG phones, but it's only compatible with OLED screens, so check your device before you download it. Also, its 'Wake on tap' feature works by keeping your screen awake (but black) at all times, which has a noticeable impact on your battery life. On the other hand, 'Lock on tap' (which doesn't use any additional battery) can be activated independently, providing a speedy way of locking your phone without using any buttons.



Our rating



TOOLS

Kustom Widget Maker

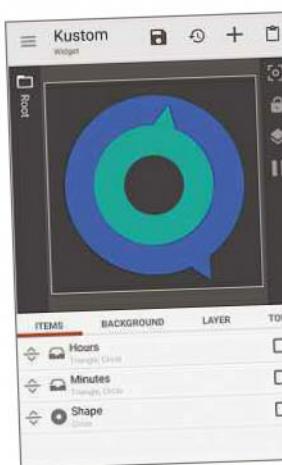
bit.ly/widget384

Min requirements:

Android 4.4

Size: 6.0MB

If you're underwhelmed by the widgets that come with apps you download, why not try making your own using KWGT Kustom Widget Maker? This app lets you create your own designs and include any data you need for digital and analogue clocks, maps, battery and memory meters, music players and more. After installing the app, you can create your first widget by using the usual process to add a KWGT widget to the home screen and then tapping it to open its customisation options. The app suggests you first use something from the Base Pack in its Load Preset section, so that you can see the possible results. We strongly support this advice, because Kustom Widget Maker's advanced editor takes some time to get to grips with, so editing a preset will be easier than starting from scratch.



Our rating



ORGANISATION

Parchi

bit.ly/parchi384

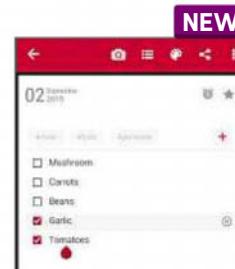
Min requirements:

Android 4.2

Size: 3.6MB

Similar to Google Keep,

Microsoft's Parchi is a minimalist note-taking app that lets you create post-its, to-do lists and reminders. You can organise your notes using tags and, unlike Keep, Parchi lets you add new entries directly from your lock screen, which is ideal when you urgently want to scribble something down. We were unable to install Parchi from the Google Play Store, but it's available from Microsoft via APKMirror (apkmirror.com) and worked perfectly on our device when we tested it. If you decide to download Parchi, remember to approve 'Unknown sources' in your phone's Security settings before trying to install it.



Our rating



ROUND UP | Quick bites

Snapseed

bit.ly/snapseed384

Min requirements:

Android 4.1

Size: Varies with device

Snapseed won the Gold Award in our recent round-up of free photo-editing apps and it's now been improved by adding support for DNG RAW files. Unfortunately, we couldn't open a DNG file when we tested the app, so please let us know if you have more luck than we did!



Captain Grocery Shopping List

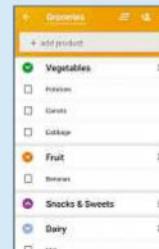
bit.ly/grocery384

Min requirements:

Android 4.1

Size: 13MB

Captain saves you from unnecessary supermarket trips by letting you create shopping lists collaboratively with friends and family in a matter of seconds. The app automatically sorts your items into categories so you only need to visit each aisle once.



Who's Down

bit.ly/whosdown384

Min requirements:

Android 4.0.3, iOS

Size: 5.7MB

This new Google app lets you find friends who are available to meet up. You can declare yourself as 'down' to hang out by flicking a switch, and specify which activities you're game for, with suggestions including 'get lunch', 'study' and 'go for a hike'.



Our rating





Best Free Apps

NEWS

Pipes News

bit.ly/pipesnews384

Min requirements: iOS 8

Size: 26.1MB

Pipes News keeps you up to speed on the topics you care about the most. When you first launch the app, you're asked to select a minimum of four interests from a list that includes technology, business and travel, as well as specialist subjects including cycling and photography. Tap Done and your news feed is immediately populated with articles based on these selections. Pipes analyses the articles you interact with the most to improve the quality of its recommendations, but you can continue to add interests or use the app's Top Stories and What's Hot sections to browse trending news you otherwise might have missed.



Our rating



5

NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

LANGUAGES

Memrise (language learning)

bit.ly/memrise384

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 20.3MB

Price: Free (with in-app purchases)

Memrise offers thousands of free language courses, but to unlock unlimited access to all the app's learning modes, you need to pay £6.99 a month or £44.99 a year.



NAVIGATION

ViewRanger GPS

bit.ly/viewranger384

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 18.4MB

Price: Free (with in-app purchases)

ViewRanger GPS is a navigation app that helps you to discover walking, hiking and cycling trail guides. Open-source street maps are free to download, but you need to pay to unlock more detailed, topographic maps.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Lucid

bit.ly/lucid384

Min requirements: iOS 8

Size: 78.6MB **Price:** £2.29

Lucid aims to take the hard work out of



TRAVEL

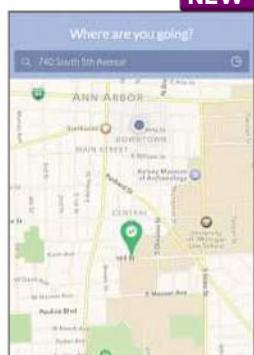
Companion

bit.ly/companion384

Min requirements: Android 4.0

Size: 7.9MB

Companion aims to make it safe to travel on your own late at night by letting your friends and family track your every move online. Enter your destination and choose one or more companions from your contacts list, who will be able to see your live position on a map (they don't have to download the app) and receive automatic alerts if you start running, drop your phone or don't arrive on time. There are also quick shortcuts to let your companion know that you feel nervous and for calling the emergency services. It's a neat idea, but it could cause unnecessary anxiety for your companions if your phone's battery runs out!



Our rating



photo-editing by optimising your snaps automatically. Its Beautify button is designed specifically to enhance portraits and selfies, removing blemishes, shine and red-eye.

GIFTS

Postsnap

bit.ly/postsnap384

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 38.2MB

Price: Free (with in-app purchases)

Postsnap lets you design and send postcards, invitations and greetings cards directly from your iPhone or iPad. Although the app is free to download, you naturally have to pay for any cards that you order.



TOOL

Truecaller

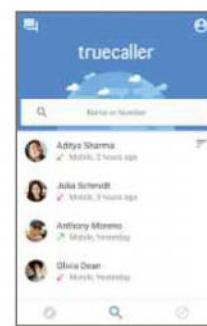
bit.ly/truecaller384

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 7, Windows Phone

Size: Varies with device

Price: Free (with in-app purchases)

Truecaller's Caller ID feature is available for free, letting you see who's calling you before you answer your phone. For £1.49 a month, you can use the app's vast database of phone numbers to search for people by name.



Memrise



Viewranger GPS



Lucid



Postsnap



Truecaller





Best New TV Apps

TV & FILM

Now TV

bit.ly/nowtv384

Min requirements: Android 4.0, iOS 6

Size: 12MB

Sky has updated the Android version of its Now TV app with two useful new features for telly addicts. The first is a personal Watchlist within the My TV section, which lets you easily save your favourite TV shows and films to view later, rather than scrolling through the long lists of available titles every time. The second addition allows you to continue browsing Now TV while you're 'casting' video to your Chromecast, whereas previously this would interrupt the programme or movie you were watching. There have also been several bug fixes and performance improvements to the app. Hopefully, the new features will be added to the iOS version in due course.



FILM

Movie Tonight

bit.ly/movie384

Min requirements: Windows Phone

Size: 7.4MB



Now here's a rarity: an entertainment app for Windows Phone that isn't available for Android or iOS. Movie Tonight helps you find the perfect film to watch based on your cinematic tastes. It works by asking you a series of questions, such as 'Do you want your movie to be famous?' to come up with viewing recommendations – the more questions you answer, the more relevant the suggestions will be. If you can't be bothered with that, you can peruse the list of films as rated by other users; browse titles by category; and access trailers, cast information and plot summaries. It's a great way to discover movies you might have missed.

TV

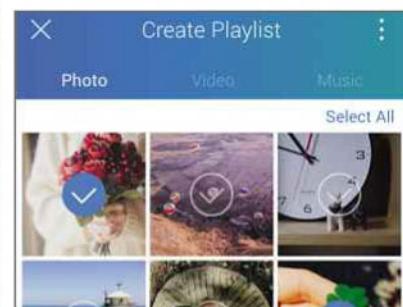
Samsung Smart View

bit.ly/samsungsmart384

Min requirements: Android 4.1

Size: 28MB

This new beta version of Samsung's Smart View app no longer turns your Android phone or tablet into a remote control for your Samsung Smart TV. Instead, it focuses on providing Chromecast-style functionality by allowing you to stream photos, music and video stored on your mobile device to your big screen. This might seem like a 'downgrade' to regular Smart View users, but the app certainly looks much smarter and provides an easy way to share media content with the rest of your family. It works with Samsung sets from 2011 and later, but not with all Android devices – for example, it's not currently compatible with the Tesco Hudl.



Don't install...

System Info Widget

bit.ly/system384

This app has remained untouched for five years, which may mean it holds the record for being the oldest one in the Play Store. Sadly, what may have seemed impressive in 2010 doesn't cut the mustard today, and its jumble of widgets displaying info about your Android device is more confusing than helpful. It certainly isn't worth the 61p the developer charges for it, especially as you can just as easily find the details it provides in your Settings.



...Install this instead

My Android

bit.ly/myandroid384

Min requirements: Android 2.3

Size: 8.9MB

How many apps do you have installed on your phone? How many calls have you received this week? How much spare memory do you have? My Android provides answers to all these questions and many more by displaying loads of information about your device in an easy to understand manner. It isn't just for reference, either; it offers various tools to perform helpful tasks such as removing unwanted apps, taking screenshots and calculating how many more photos you can capture before you run out of space. You can also discover technical specs including the manufacturer and model of your device, and the version of Android you're running. Super! ■





Windows 10

—The First—
BIG UPDATE

COVER
FEATURE

With the new Fall Update, Microsoft has fixed many problems users had with Windows 10, but has it gone far enough? **Wayne Williams** reveals the best new tools, bug fixes and hidden hacks

Windows 10 has generated a lot of excitement and interest, both before and after its release, and it's easy to understand why. Its predecessor, Windows 8, was a major flop and it was vital for Microsoft to recover from that disaster and prove that Windows is still relevant in a world increasingly dominated by Android and iOS. There's no question that the company has managed to turn things around, producing an operating system that blends the best elements of Windows 7 and Windows 8 into a new, modern hybrid, but we at *Web User*

— along with many PC users — have been cautious about the new operating system. Not least because of concerns about Windows 10's reliability, its attitude to privacy and the sneaky catches that undermined the notion of it being a truly 'free' upgrade.

In this 10-page special, we revisit Windows 10 following the release of the first major update, codenamed Threshold 2 but officially known as Fall, to reveal what's been fixed, what could still be improved and why now is the time to upgrade if you haven't already.

WINDOWS 10

— The story so far —

It's been a busy three-and-a-half months for Microsoft's new operating system. Here, we recap the highs and lows since its release

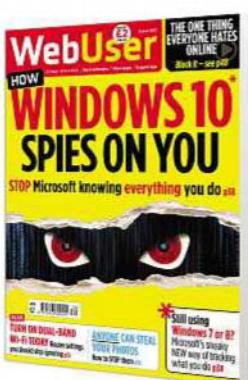
Windows 10 was launched to great fanfare on Wednesday 29 July 2015, in 190 countries. According to the latest usage statistics from NetMarketShare (netmarketshare.com), it now claims 7.94% of the market for Desktop operating systems, compared to 55.71% for Windows 7 and 13.22% for Windows 8/8.1. That's a pretty good figure, although take-up of the new operating system has slowed over the past couple of months.

At the last count, Microsoft said Windows 10 had been installed on more than 120 million computers worldwide, which puts it on track to hit the firm's stated goal of being on one billion devices by 2018. The fact that it's a free upgrade to users of Windows 7 and 8+ – provided they act within the first year – has certainly encouraged people to install the OS, as has Microsoft promoting it at every opportunity, including advertising it within previous versions of Windows.

Dogged by controversy

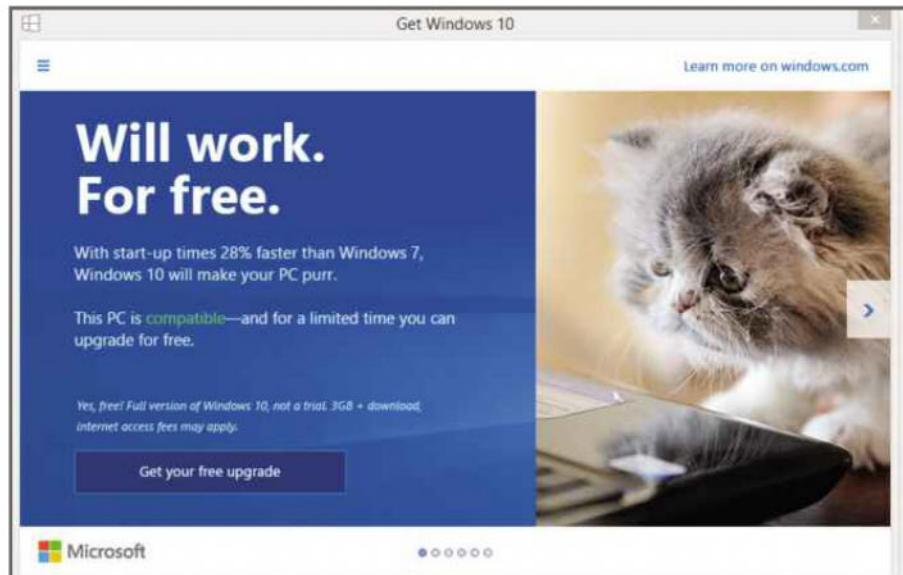
Although Windows 10 has been well received for the most part, it has been dogged by a series of problems and controversies. Early adopters suffered from all manner of errors ranging from lost sound and incompatible drivers to a problem that caused some unfortunate systems to become stuck in a reboot loop during the upgrade process. More

worryingly, the 'personalisation' features in Windows 10 allow Microsoft to spy on its users in numerous ways (see Issue 380 of *Web User* for more details – bit.ly/webuser380), and the hidden costs of the 'free' OS (which we exposed in



Issue 378, bit.ly/webuser378 have become increasingly apparent.

Other controversies include Microsoft automatically downloading the



Microsoft has been aggressively promoting Windows 10 in older versions of the OS

Windows 10 installation files onto compatible systems, regardless of whether they were actively requested, and even forcibly starting the upgrade process on some computers, much to the owners' surprise and annoyance.

Microsoft admitted that this devious download was a mistake, yet it will potentially be doing the same thing on a much larger scale next year. According to Terry Myerson, Microsoft's Executive Vice President of the Windows and Devices Group, the software giant will start pushing Windows 10 even more aggressively in 2016. "Early next year, we expect to be re-categorizing Windows 10 as a 'Recommended Update,'" Myerson said in a blog post published at the end of October (bit.ly/1vJL9u).

[msblog384](http://bit.ly/msblog384)). "Depending upon your Windows Update settings, this may cause the upgrade process to automatically initiate on your device. Before the upgrade changes the OS of your device, you will be clearly prompted to choose whether or not to continue. And of course, if you choose to upgrade (our recommendation!), then you will have 31 days to roll back to your previous Windows version if you don't love it."

Microsoft says that this approach will make it easier for people to upgrade to the new OS, although it's hardly difficult to do so at the moment. The automatic update may also result in some users accidentally upgrading without knowing how to roll back to their previous



You can turn off Microsoft's 'suggestions' in your Start menu if the ads annoy you

Best new tools in W

Fall includes a lot of fixes and new features that make

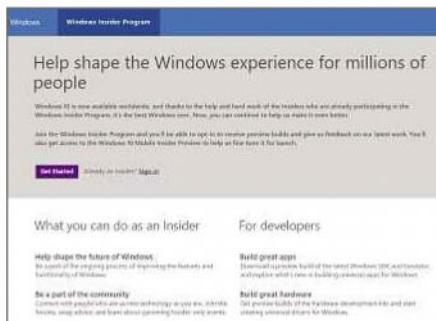
version of Windows.

As if that wasn't bad enough, the tech giant recently started showing 'ads' for recommended apps in the Windows 10 Start menu which, unsurprisingly, hasn't gone down too well with users. Microsoft claims that this "recommended apps" promotion isn't advertising, because no money has changed hands, but it's still an unwelcome intrusion as far as many of us are concerned. Fortunately it's easy to disable these ads (and yes, Microsoft, they are *definitely* ads). Go to Settings, Personalisation, Start and toggle off the 'Occasionally show suggestions in Start' setting. This is a new option that's only just been introduced for most users.

Crossing the Threshold

Aside from a four-star review in Issue 377 of *Web User*, our previous coverage of Windows 10 has adopted a somewhat cautious approach to the OS - and rightly so, given all the reported problems, privacy concerns and forced upgrades. However, the just-released Fall update (previously referred to as Threshold 2) is intended to fix a lot of the issues we've raised. It doesn't, if we're honest, improve Windows 10 to the degree that Windows 8.1 fixed Windows 8, but then the tiled operating system had many more fundamental problems that required addressing than Windows 10 does.

Anyone who's on the Windows Insider Program (see box on facing page) will have seen most of the changes in this update already, because they've been included in previous preview builds. But if you're on the official RTM (Release to Manufacturing) build, as most Windows 10 users are, they'll be new to you.



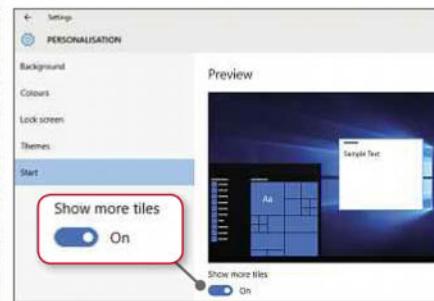
The Windows Insider Program landing page. It features a call to action to 'Help shape the Windows experience for millions of people'. It also includes sections for 'What you can do as an Insider' (such as helping to test new features and giving feedback) and 'For developers' (such as testing and giving feedback on the Windows Dev Center). There are also sections for 'Help shape the future of Windows' and 'Build great hardware'.

Sign up to the Windows Insider Program to try new features before everyone else

Expanded Start menu

One of the first things you'll notice in the Fall Update is that Microsoft has tweaked Windows 10's Start menu. This allows you to add a fourth column of medium-sized tiles to the menu, whereas previously you were limited to just three columns. You can also have two large-sized tiles side-by-side if you prefer. To activate this feature, go to Settings, Personalisation, Start and select 'Show more tiles'.

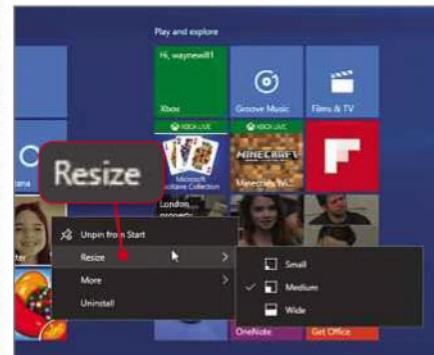
There used to be a limit of 512 tiles on the Start menu, but that has now been raised to 2,048. This is rather a lot and comes at the expense of simplicity and speed, so we wouldn't recommend going overboard!



You can now increase the size of your Start menu to display thousands of tiles

Improved menus and tiles

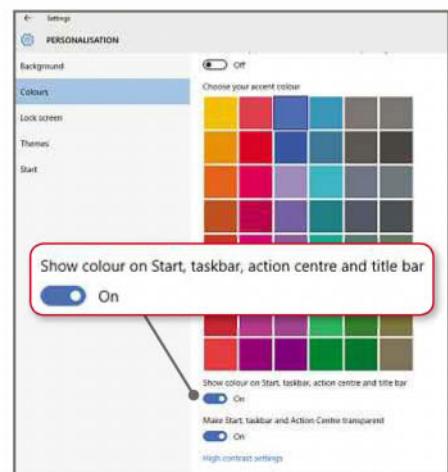
There are four different types of right-click context menu in Windows 10, and the ones that appear will depend on where you are in the OS and what you're doing. The context menu in Start has been improved and gains new icons for adjusting the size of the tiles. Start tiles now support jump lists, too, so you can easily access individual items within a particular program or app.



The improved right-click menu makes it much easier to adjust the size of tiles

Updated colour options

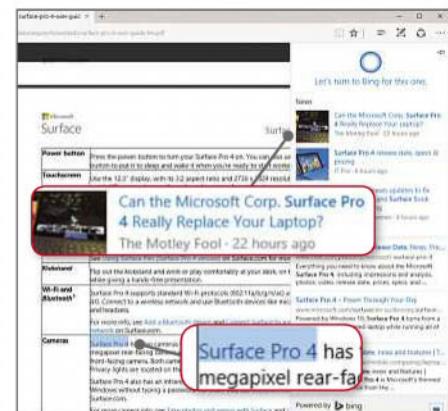
It's now a lot simpler to change the default colour scheme for the Start menu, Action Centre, taskbar and title bars of windows. Just go to Settings, Personalisation, Colours and turn on the switch next to 'Show colour on Start, taskbar, action centre and title bar'. Title bars now automatically appear darker, which we personally prefer.



Changing the Windows 10 colour scheme is now much simpler

Cortana gets smarter

Microsoft's personal assistant works reasonably well in Windows 10, but there's always room for improvement. Changes in the update include giving Cortana the ability to intelligently understand your handwritten notes, and setting reminders based on locations, times and numbers. She can also keep better track of your leisure activities. For example, if you've booked online



Cortana now works harder to be useful, rather than merely intrusive

Windows 10

the OS smoother and smarter. Read on to discover our favourite improvements

to see a film at the cinema, she'll note the details contained in the email confirmation and remind you of them in advance.

We particularly like that when you're reading a PDF document in Microsoft Edge, you can now highlight some text, then right-click and ask Cortana to find more information about a particular name, phrase or other item.

Enhancements to Edge

Edge is still very rough around the edges (pardon the pun!), but Microsoft has made some welcome changes to the browser, including improved HTML5 and CSS3 support to make web pages load more smoothly, and the ability to sync your Favourites and Reading List across computers.

There's also a useful new Tab Preview feature, which lets you view a thumbnail of a website when you hover your mouse over an open tab.

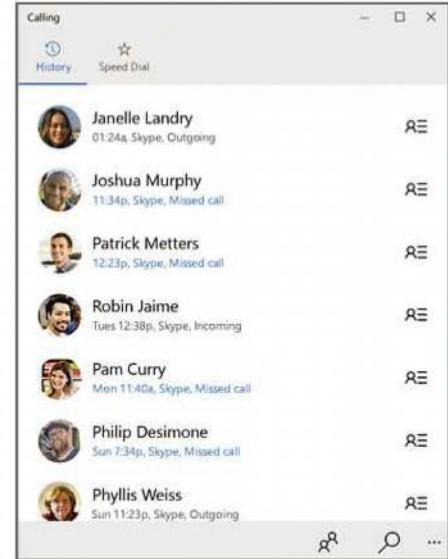


Edge now lets you preview the contents of a tab without needing to switch to it

Handy new built-in apps

Skype's messaging, calling and video capabilities are now integrated in Windows 10 through the 'universal' Messaging, Phone and Skype video apps, which work on phones, tablets and PCs. Incoming notifications appear in the Action Centre (as you'd expect), but what's really useful is that you can perform a Quick Reply without opening the Skype app itself.

Microsoft Phone makes it easy to



Make voice and video calls instantly using the integrated Skype and Phone apps

keep in touch with people using your favourite calling services, and Skype and voice calls are shown in your history



WHY I'M A WINDOWS 10 INSIDER

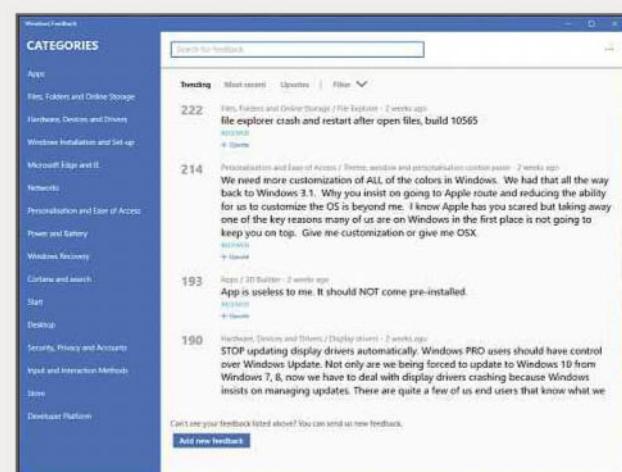
Wayne Williams says:

Before the new OS officially launched, the main purpose of the Windows 10 Insider Program was to give people a chance to try it out and help shape its direction. It's debatable how much notice Microsoft actually took of our Insider input, but it would be nice to think that the five million of us who signed up as public beta testers played at least a small part in helping Microsoft identify and fix problems that might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Windows 10 is now available to all, but the Insider Program is still going strong. As before, you can be on the Fast ring or the Slow ring. The former gives you more frequent – and more buggy – builds to install, while the latter offers fewer builds, but a more stable experience. In my opinion, if you're going to be an Insider, then

you should be on the Fast ring. There's no point in signing up to test early builds if you're not prepared to go all in.

While it's great to be able to try new features in advance and benefit from improvements, there are downsides. Usually, it's that the new features are a little half-baked, although if something is really buggy, Microsoft will disable it by default and let you decide whether to take the risk or not. Another negative is that when adding new features and improving existing functionality, Microsoft frequently messes up elements of the OS that were working perfectly well before. Some existing features even get temporarily removed. And there can be an agonising wait between builds, even



on the Fast ring – anything from a fortnight to a month.

Microsoft wisely cautions Insiders against using a preview build on a system you rely on (for work, say), but provided you accept and understand the risks (and take precautions, such as backing up your data), you'll be fine. I've been an Insider since the program launched and have yet to experience any major problems.



Display stunning photos from Bing on your Windows 10 lock screen

(depending on the device you're using).

Sway, Microsoft's fun new presentation creator, which we covered in Issue 379 (bit.ly/webuser379), is also included by default.

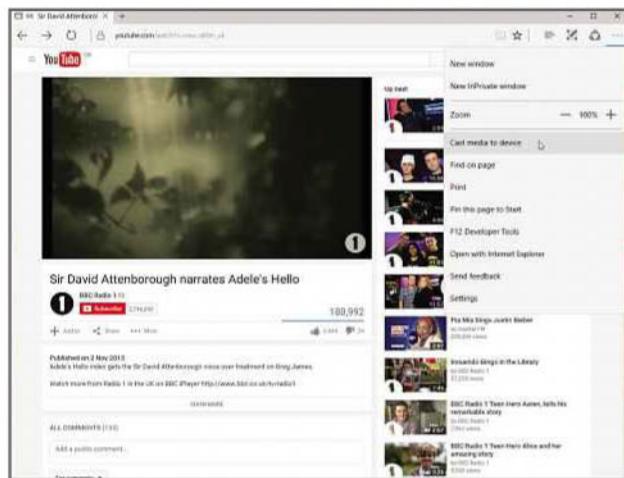
Improved memory management

While a lot of the new changes in Windows 10 are cosmetic, there are a few under-the-bonnet tweaks that can potentially make a big difference to your PC's performance. This is especially true of the improved memory manager – if your system starts running out of memory, Windows 10 will now compress unused pages, reducing the amount of memory used by each process, and allowing it to keep more applications running smoothly.

Cast music and video

Just as you can cast content from Google Chrome to a Chromecast, so Windows 10 now lets you cast video, picture and audio content from Edge to devices that use Microsoft's Miracast streaming technology on your network. You can cast YouTube videos, Facebook photo albums, music from Pandora and much more, but there are some restrictions with casting content in Edge – protected media (such as that found on Netflix) is not supported.

You'll find a list of Miracast-certified products at bit.ly/miracast384.



You can now cast YouTube videos from Edge to your TV via a Miracast device



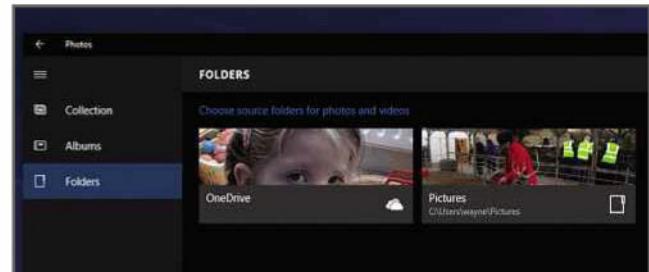
Display photos on your lock screen

If you like the daily images displayed by Microsoft's search engine Bing, you can now enjoy them on the Windows 10 lock screen. Windows Spotlight was a feature that was originally only available in the Home edition of Windows 10, but it's now available to Pro users, too. To enable it, go to Settings, Personalisation, 'Lock screen' and select Windows Spotlight in the drop-down Background menu. To see a new image, lock your screen by pressing Win+L.

As well as the image itself, you'll see a message asking if you "Like what you see?". Hover over this and select either "I want more" – to keep that image and see more like it – or "Not a fan" if you'd like something different. The more pictures you like, the better idea Windows will have of the sort of thing you want to see, and it will customise the images accordingly.

Updated apps

Windows 10's built-in apps have been updated with some useful new features. For example, the Photos app now has a folder view, which makes it easy to



The updated Photos app makes it easier to browse pictures on your PC and beyond

browse OneDrive and PC content. The Xbox app has received a big update and now shows your friends' activity in real time, as well as game-progress comparison (so you can see how well you're doing, compared to your friends). It's also easier to find and add Facebook friends, and access the Xbox Store to browse and buy Xbox One games.

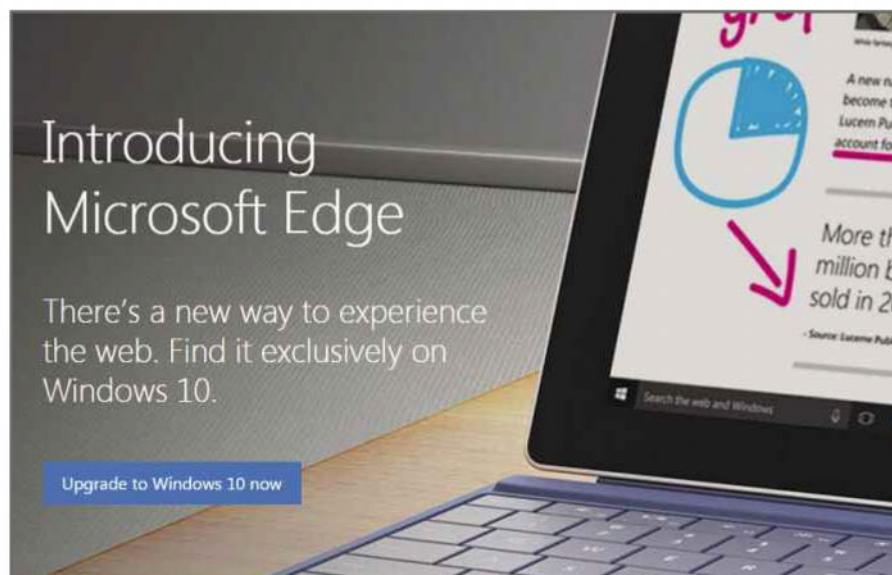
The Groove, Mail, Calendar, Store and Maps applications have also received significant updates.

Windows 10 activation changes

Activating Windows 10 was previously a rather messy process. When upgrading to the new OS, the installer used your current valid Windows licence and converted it to one that worked with Windows 10, automatically storing the entitlement in the cloud. Once Windows 10 was installed, you could format the drive, perform a clean install and use the newly converted key to install and activate the OS – provided you used it on the same PC. Happily, Microsoft has simplified things and you can now activate Windows 10 with a Windows 7, 8 or 8.1 key, during or after installation. Previously, using a key from an older OS didn't work.

What we still want to see in Windows 10

The Fall Update definitely improves Windows 10, but it hasn't overcome all its problems. Here are some annoyances that continue to frustrate us



Still no Edge add-ons

Microsoft Edge remains very much a work in progress and, while it offers enough functionality for basic use, it lacks one big thing we take for granted in other browsers: extensions. If you were hoping that support for these would be added in the first major update to Windows 10, you're going to be sadly disappointed. Extension support will likely appear in the next major update, codenamed Redstone, but this isn't due until 2016.

Hard-to-change settings in Edge

Changing the default search engine from Bing should be more intuitive. At present, you have to open the search engine you want to use and click the 'View advanced settings' button at the bottom of Edge's Settings pane, then scroll down and click the Change button under 'Search in the address bar with... Bing' and select the search engine you actually want, which – with luck – should be listed there. This seems far too complicated for such a basic customisation.

Being able to change the default download folder directly in Edge would be great, too. Not everyone wants to use 'C:\Users\[username]\Downloads', Microsoft!

Can't fully customise the Start menu

Sure, you can customise the right-hand, tiled side of the Start menu, but the left-hand side remains annoyingly fixed. For example, if you want to reorganise the 'Most Used' list, you can't. This is a pretty basic change that Microsoft really should have implemented by now.

No single uninstaller for programs and apps

Want to uninstall something? Well, if it's an app, you need to go to Settings, Apps & Features. But if it's a program, there's a good chance it won't show up there. Instead, you need to go the old 'Programs and Features' interface. This lists every installed program – but not apps. You can choose to uninstall an item from the Start menu by right-clicking its entry or tile, but all that does is open the relevant uninstaller. How hard is it to create a single uninstaller which handles both apps and programs?

How can Edge be worth using when it still doesn't support extensions?

If IObit can do it with Uninstaller 5 (www.iobit.com), why can't Microsoft?

Release Cortana from Bing

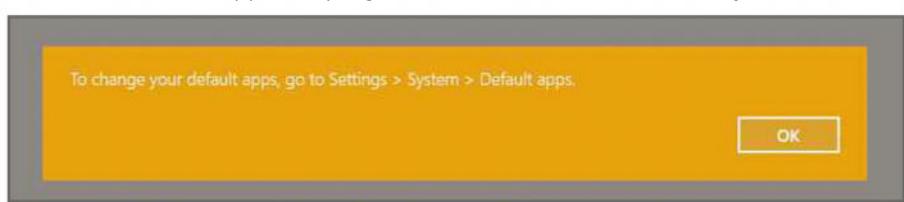
You can change Bing to Google easily enough in Edge, but Cortana only uses Microsoft's search engine. You can force Cortana to use Chrome (or Yahoo or DuckDuckGo) using the Chrometana extension (bit.ly/chrometana384), but we'd like Microsoft to make it easy to switch search engines directly through Cortana's settings.



Chrometana lets you redirect Bing and Cortana searches to Google and Yahoo

Some 'legacy' options still don't work

If you launch a program that's not set as a default, you may see a message inviting you to 'select file types that [program] should open'. Choose to do this and you'd expect to be taken to a settings page where you can initiate the changes. However, Windows 10 has other ideas and will instead display a message stating 'To change your default apps, go to Settings > System > Default apps'. Clicking OK doesn't take you there, it just closes the message. We've encountered this laziness on several occasions, and were hoping Microsoft would have sorted this by now.



Setting which files open in which programs is much more hassle than it should be

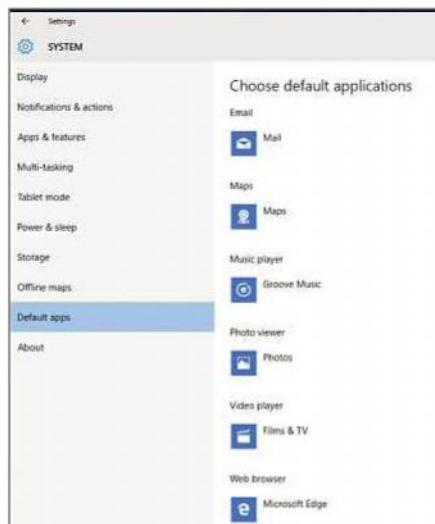


Fix Windows 10's woes

It may have been updated, but Windows 10 is still far from perfect

Fix Windows Update issues

Windows 10 forces updates on you, whether you want them or not, but if Windows Update has a problem, it can prevent the OS from downloading these mandatory updates to your PC. This potentially puts you at risk from bugs and security threats. The Reset Windows Update Agent (bit.ly/resetwin384), which you need to run as an administrator (right-click the



You don't have to use Microsoft's default apps for everyday tasks

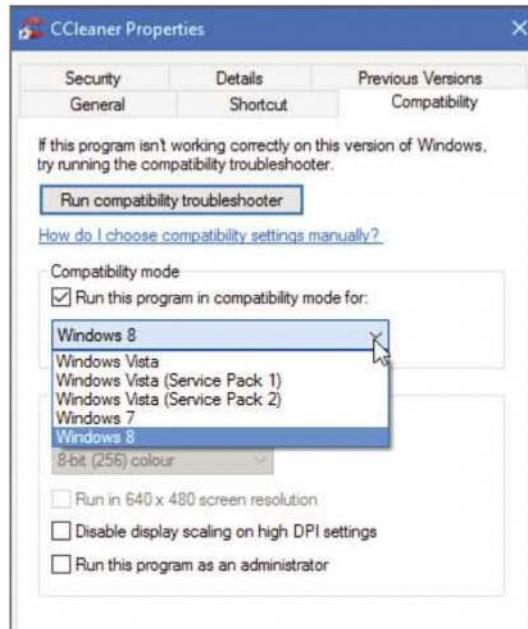
program to do this), provides you with a list of commands you can run to hopefully solve the problem.

Change the default apps

If Windows 10 has changed your default application choices to something else – for example, making Edge your default browser instead of the superior Chrome – you can change it back and also set your own defaults for other programs. Open the Start menu, type default app settings and hit Enter. If you prefer to use the Control Panel, open the Start menu, type Default programs, hit Enter and click 'Set your default programs' in the window that opens.

Overcome software problems

The majority of third-party software developers have been quick to release updates that ensure their programs are Windows 10-compatible, but if you find an application that has yet to be updated, and is running badly on the new OS, you can try running it in



If old programs won't work properly, try running them in Compatibility mode

Compatibility Mode. Right-click the application's executable file, select Properties and open the Compatibility tab, then choose the version of Windows the software last ran on properly (Windows 7 or 8). Hopefully, that will fix your problems.

SHOULD YOU UPGRADE?

Are you still on the fence as to whether or not to upgrade to Windows 10? You're not alone. The recent numbers from NetMarketShare, as mentioned earlier, show that even with the new OS being available as a 'free' upgrade to Windows 7 and 8+, users, people aren't rushing to install it. If you're happy with your existing version of Windows, then there's no reason not to stay with it, at least for a while longer. The free upgrade period runs until July 29 2016, so provided you act before then, you won't need to pay a penny for switching to Windows 10 (and Microsoft might extend this period if upgrade numbers remain slow).

Despite no longer receiving any form of updates, XP still accounts for 11.68% of Desktop operating systems,

which is surprisingly high when you consider that it's now very outdated and no longer secure. At the same time, it's also understandable – why upgrade if your current OS does everything you want and you're happy with how it works?

XP users really should switch to a different OS, for security reasons alone, but they may find the transition to Windows 10 rather jarring. Also, there's a cost attached because they'll need to purchase a Windows 10 licence to install it, and there's the danger that the latest version of Windows

won't run on a much older PC.

A better idea might be to buy a copy of Windows 7 from Amazon, and try that. It will be cheaper than a new licence for Windows 10, and

you'll be able to upgrade to the newer OS for free later on, should you choose to. The version of Windows 10 you'll receive will depend on the version of Windows 7 (or 8+) you have installed, so it's worth picking up the Professional edition, rather than Home.



Worst problems

from perfect. Here we explain how to overcome the worst annoyances

Windows 10 is stuck in a reboot loop

Some users have reported Windows 10 failing to install correctly. Part-way through the upgrade process, the message: 'We couldn't complete the updates. Undoing changes. Don't turn off your computer' pops up. If you're lucky, you can boot into Windows and try again but, occasionally, a system might get caught in a reboot loop when Windows tries – and fails – to complete the upgrade repeatedly.

To get out of this, press F8 during bootup to get into Safe Mode, then open a Command Prompt with elevated privileges (type CMD from the Start menu, right-click Command Prompt and select 'Run as Administrator'). Type: net stop wuauserv into the prompt window and hit Enter. Next, type: net stop bits and browse to: C:\Windows\SoftwareDistribution

Delete all the contents there, then restart your computer.

Use Microsoft's troubleshooting tools

Microsoft has released a selection of free, downloadable tools designed to overcome common Windows 10 problems. All the tools need to be run in administrator mode. Try the following:

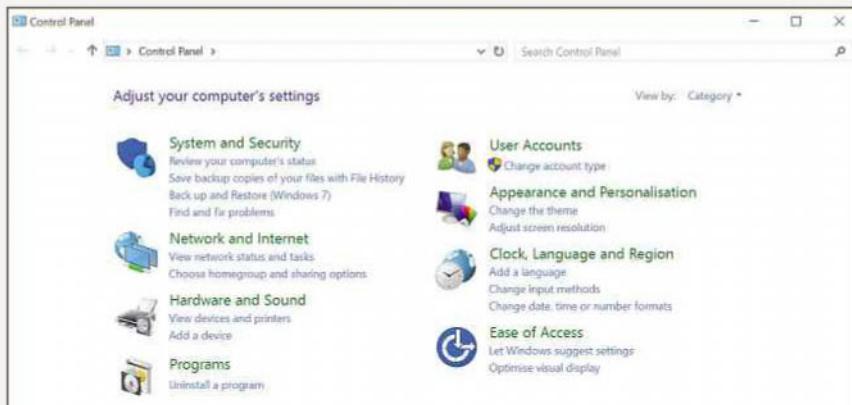
- Windows 10 App Store not working (bit.ly/mstrouble1-384)
- Windows 10 Mail and Calendar apps freeze upon opening and Windows Store app stopped downloading (may fix other app problems) (bit.ly/mstrouble2-384)
- Problems installing and uninstalling programs (bit.ly/mstrouble3-384)
- Find and fix problems with Printers (bit.ly/mstrouble4-384)
- Settings won't open, or the Store launches instead (bit.ly/mstrouble5-384)

Start again from scratch

If you're having lots of problems with Windows 10, you can try resetting the OS. Go to Settings, Update &

Resetting Windows 10 is the best way to solve persistent problems

WILL WINDOWS 10 DITCH THE CONTROL PANEL?



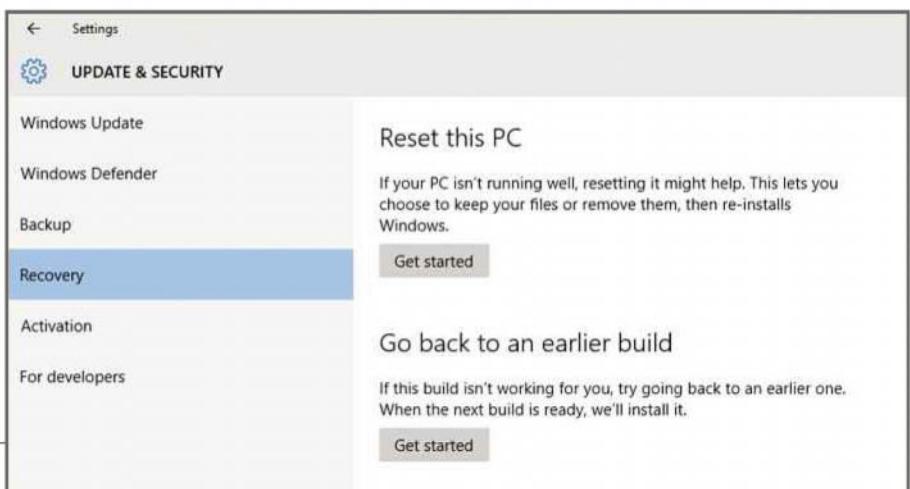
It seems weird – no forget that, it *is* weird – that Microsoft provides two separate places to configure Windows 10. You'll find most settings in the Settings app (obviously enough), but the Control Panel, which has been a part of Microsoft's operating system since the days of Windows 95, not only remains but offers different, more advanced configuration settings that can't be found in its newer counterpart.

If you prefer to use the Control Panel in Windows 10, we've got some

bad news for you – Microsoft is planning to eventually ditch it and move the remaining features to the Settings app. There's no timescale for this, but the software giant has said on numerous occasions that removing the Control Panel makes a lot of sense and will result in a more streamlined and efficient OS. The company also claims that the majority of Windows Insiders favour the Settings app over the Control Panel, adding support to the company's future plans.

Security, Recovery, then click 'Get started' under 'Reset this PC'. You can choose to 'Keep my files' or 'Remove everything'. The latter will give you a completely fresh start but you must make sure you back up all

your personal data before proceeding. Some PCs also give you the ability to 'Restore factory settings'. Whichever option you choose, you will need to reinstall all your programs afterwards.





My first three months with Windows 10

Back in Issue 375, **Barry Collins** predicted that Windows 10 wouldn't be ready for its 29 July release. Here, he reflects on his experiences with the operating system so far

Not a day passes when I don't want to punch Windows 10 in the face. It's the Miranda of operating systems – constantly inventing new ways to annoy me.

My biggest beef with Windows 10 is the Action Centre – or, more accurately, the Inaction Centre. It simply stopped working on my main work PC about a month ago. I still get notifications (often hideously delayed) and can click the little speech bubble icon to make Action Centre appear, but no sooner has it hovered into view then it disappears again. I've been forced to become the British Notification Speed Reading Champion, scanning my unread messages in less time than it takes to sneeze.

It's certainly not the only glitch I'm battling with. My day often starts with Windows 10's 'personal' assistant cheerily greeting me with "Hello <name>!", making it about as personal as a cold call from a PPI salesman. Live tiles in the Start Menu frequently fail to update: I woke up every day for a

fortnight to discover that the Shadow Chancellor had changed his mind about benefit cuts (although that could conceivably be true). And only yesterday, while teaching students on my photography course, Windows 10 point-blank refused to open any photos on my Desktop, claiming it "couldn't find the network drive". I haven't got a network drive. I never have. Only a group of alarmed photography students, who are wondering why the angry man keeps pounding his head against the keyboard.

None of these are show-stopping problems. Even the silly 'network drive' bug had righted itself by the time I got back home. But, as I predicted when Windows 10 launched in the summer, even three months down the line it still feels like an undercooked omelette, as if Microsoft rushed to get it finished instead of waiting until it was ready.

Microsoft rushed to get it finished for an arbitrary deadline instead of waiting until it was actually ready to release.

I suspect that many of my problems stem from the fact that I upgraded from Windows 8.1, instead of starting afresh with a clean installation like I did on my largely bug-free test PC. But then Microsoft practically rammed this free upgrade down our throats, downloading it onto our systems whether we asked for it or not. If it's going to bend our arms backwards to make us take an in-place upgrade, it should damn well make sure it works properly.

There are some things I like about Windows 10. The Start Menu is much improved (despite the sticky tiles), and I really like the little-known feature that lets you uninstall a program by right-clicking it directly from the Start Menu. Alt-Tab is a now massively useful keyboard shortcut with the super-sized thumbnails of your open apps, and I love the option to beam Xbox games to my PC so I can play FIFA 16 even if the family is watching the main TV. Yes, I do need to get out more.

Yet, most of Windows 10's "killer" features are dead to me. I speak to Cortana about as often as I speak to a gynaecologist, I've never needed a virtual desktop and the Edge browser is like an embarrassing acquaintance you try to avoid making eye contact with at parties.

Was it worth the free upgrade? Barely.



“ Windows 10 still feels like an undercooked omelette, as if Microsoft rushed to get it finished instead of waiting until it was ready ”

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What you say...



The Edge browser wouldn't let me use my usual homepage so I reverted to Internet Explorer 11, and I've continued to use Windows Live Mail rather than the Mail app. With these alterations, Windows 10 seems perfect!

The Badger

I don't like Edge, Mail or Cortana. Edge is not yet complete and I use Pale Moon as my default browser, anyway. Mail is more complicated than Windows Live Mail, which I use instead, and Cortana is a waste of space!

Otherwise, I like Windows 10 very much, having removed a lot of dross from it, such as game tiles, and turned off Microsoft's spying activities. It is much faster than Windows 8.1.

rogerman40

I dislike the built-in spying and collecting of my private data. It does this by default, and you should publicise this in *Web User*.

Meh @pplwhocantpark

I liked it at first, but now... ugh. Some apps will not load from tiles and I can't download apps from the store. I don't like the adverts or understand why Microsoft needs to spy on its users. Maybe it's just me – "A bad workman blames his tools"! Hopefully the update will get things working again.

Picaso

I was unimpressed with the apps in Windows 8 and 8.1, and was hoping Windows 10 would improve matters, but I still find I am avoiding them.

spiraleye

We asked *Web User* readers what they like and dislike most about Windows 10, after the first three months of using the operating system. Here's what you told us



I don't like Edge. I have folders full of bookmarks on my Firefox toolbar to save space, but when I imported them into Edge, they wouldn't open. I don't like that updates are forced on you. Previously, you could choose which ones to install and hide, but now you can't. I turned off Cortana because it was too intrusive. I do find Windows 10 boots up and shuts down quicker than 8.1. All in all, I am quite happy with 10. It's been 100% reliable since I installed it, with no crashes or problems, and I think it was worth installing.

seanoc

I think it burns through my laptop's battery life much quicker than Windows 8.1, but I prefer Windows 10.

Simon Mellor @Simon9Hops

Love it. No crashing and no problems.

Joanne Evans

I don't like anything about it and I'm glad my Windows 7 desktop PC never offered me an upgrade.

Gill Hodson

My new laptop came with Windows 10 preinstalled and, after 20 days, I'm still not convinced it's superior to Windows 7. This seems a good enough reason not to hurry to upgrade my four-year old desktop PC from Windows 7, even though it's free to do so.

George

It's been a great little earner for me, fixing bugs for people who have upgraded from Windows 7 with no backup! I dislike all the bugs and very poor upgrades, and I have given up trying to get Windows Mail working.

Steve Ellis @gb022621

I'm pleased with it in the main, and have installed it on three PCs, including an old netbook. I like Edge, but I wish it let me save downloads directly to my Desktop and open my homepage (Google) in a new tab. I love the multiple Desktops, speed and tiled Start menu.

dave1510

I see it as a cross between Windows 7 and Windows 8, with improvements to both. I've had no problems worth mentioning and I've installed it on four computers. It's a huge and successful undertaking on Microsoft's part, bearing in mind that millions of computers were upgraded worldwide. I think Microsoft should be congratulated for a job well done. My only concern going forward is the general trend towards personal-data collection, but I don't think that problem is specific to Windows 10.

Joe_London

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Why Vivaldi is the best new browser in town

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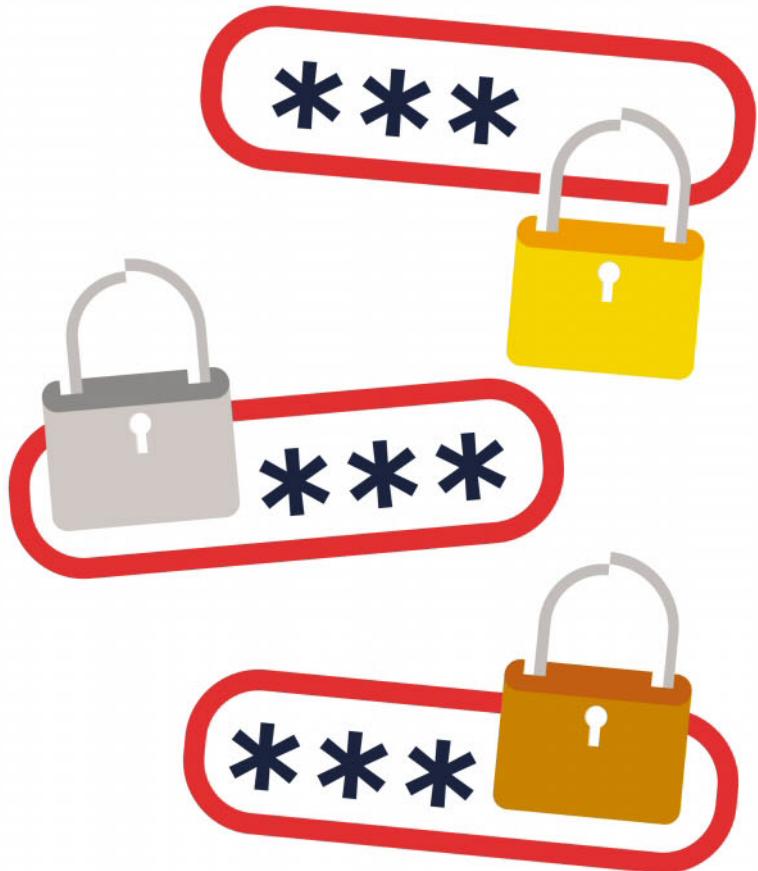
• HIDDEN MENU HACKS

Solve annoying problems using secret settings

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Best free password managers

In October, LastPass was bought by LogMeIn, which has many LastPass users worried that its new owners might increase subscription prices or withdraw the free version altogether. **Andy Shaw** weighs up six free alternatives



PasswordBox | www.passwordbox.com | ★★★★★

FEATURES ★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★

What we liked:

PasswordBox is another startup that got snapped up by a bigger business but, unlike

LastPass, it had paid-for elements before it was purchased and the new owner Intel made it completely free.

The service is two-pronged. The main operation runs from your web browser, using an add-on you can install in Chrome, Firefox, IE, Opera and Safari (if you're on a Mac). All your passwords are securely stored online and it syncs perfectly with its apps, which are available for Android and iOS. Most of the other services we tested work with a single device for free but charge for syncing, which gave PasswordBox an instant advantage.

Using the service is easy. When you first download the browser add-on and set up your account, you're walked through the process step by step and shown how to set up your first password with one of six popular sites, including



Facebook, Twitter and Dropbox. When you sign up to a site, a PasswordBox icon appears in the text boxes to show that the software is going to store its details. To log back into a website, you simply click the toolbar button and select the thumbnail icon of the site you want to

open. The add-on will auto-fill the form with your username and password, so all you need to do is click the sign-in button.

There are a number of other interesting extra features, including a secure notepad that lets you store encrypted notes, and the option to share your passwords with a family member, so they can access your accounts in the event of your death.

How it can be improved:

If you only need to have your passwords available on a single PC using just one browser, you might be better off using our Silver Award winner because it saves your password data offline. Storing data online is reasonably safe but it's not as secure as keeping it on your own PC.

OUR VERDICT

PasswordBox does for free what other services charge for, namely the ability to sync your passwords across all your devices. Primarily running as a browser add-on, but with mobile apps available, too, this is a great choice if you want access to your passwords on more than one device.

WebUser
GOLD
AWARD

KeePass Password Safe | keepass.info | ★★★★☆

FEATURES ★★★☆☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★☆☆ EASE OF USE ★★★☆☆

What we liked:

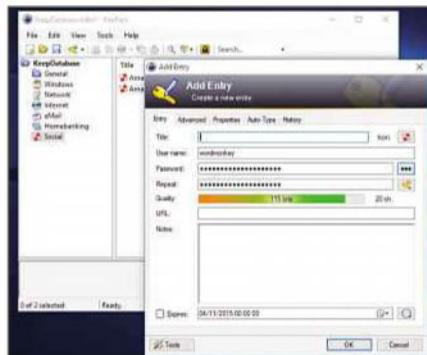
KeePass has offered an open-source alternative to LastPass for as long as we can remember. It doesn't have a flashy interface but it's a solid, hard-working tool that's ideal for storing your passwords.

The software is PC-based and essentially consists of a purpose-built database for storing password and login information. It has a more utilitarian feel than the likes of PasswordBox, but everything is encrypted and stored locally, so you don't need to worry about your passwords sitting on a server, away from your control.

When the software starts, you're faced with a blank screen, which can be a bit disconcerting, but once you start entering passwords, things soon click into place. It's a secure place to keep your usernames and passwords for future reference.

How it can be improved:

KeePass doesn't give your browser access to your passwords, which seems



like a major drawback but, because it's open source, there are add-ons that let KeePass do almost anything you could dream of, including integrating well with your favourite browser. However, it's not as slick a service as PasswordBox.

OUR VERDICT

KeePass is an excellent secure database but it doesn't integrate particularly well with the web on its own. There are add-ons that will do this, but they add an unnecessary layer of complexity to the service.

Clipperz | clipperz.is | ★★★☆☆

FEATURES ★★★☆☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★☆☆ EASE OF USE ★★★☆☆

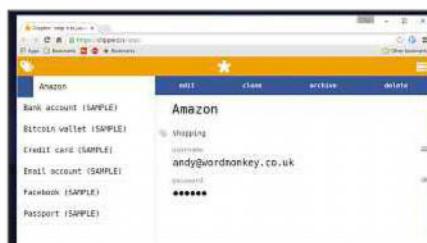
What we liked:

Clipperz is a web-based database designed to keep your personal information secure and accessible online. You can use it for your passwords but, like PasswordBox, it can also store any other information you regularly need to access, such as your bank and credit card details.

Because all the information is stored in a website, you don't need to worry about whether it will sync with one device or another. Instead, you just access it from any device that has a browser connected to the internet. The site is essentially the same wherever you access it from, but it's been designed to work well on all screen sizes, adapting to mobiles so you don't have to concern yourself with separate apps. You can add new data with a single click, and the site recognises what sort of information you're inputting.

How it can be improved:

Strangely, for a service that operates



within a browser, it doesn't do a particularly good job of auto-filling your details into websites. In previous versions, this was done with a bookmarklet, which you clicked while on the page you want to fill. However, it would seem that more and more websites are blocking this, making logging into many sites more fiddly.

OUR VERDICT

This service is as portable as they come – you just need a browser to provide access to all your saved passwords. Surprisingly, though, it doesn't handle the auto-login process very well.

BEST OF THE REST

Dashlane Free

www.dashlane.com

If you only need to keep your passwords on a single device, Dashlane is a solid option. It has its own software and integrates seamlessly with your browser, capturing passwords and other data as you traverse the web, then filling them in for you. The downside is that it costs \$39.99 per year (around £26) if you want to sync with other devices, which PasswordBox does for free.



Sticky Password

www.sticky-password.com

Sticky Password has a similar feel to Dashlane but doesn't look quite as sophisticated. It's also free on a single device but syncing costs \$19.99 per year (around £13) or \$99.99



(around £65) for a lifetime license. You can try it free for 30 days but we think PasswordBox is better because it's completely free.

White Sky FastConnect

www.whitesky.com

Like PasswordBox, this integrates with your browser, just not as tightly or as well as our Gold Award-winner. It doesn't install a browser toolbar button so you can't click the software and get an overview of your passwords directly. Instead, you need to open the separate tool. It's also connected to a web payment system, has its own search bar and displays ads in a panel on the right, which makes it feel like an adware add-on.

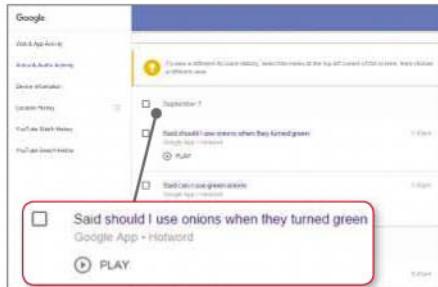


STOP THE WEB EAVESDROPPING

Controlling the web with your voice saves you typing, but it can compromise your privacy. **Robert Irvine** reveals how to make sure speech-recognition tools are only listening when you want them to

Stop Google stealing your voice

Over the last few years, Google has been heavily pushing its voice-recognition tools, especially the 'OK Google' option that lets you search the web hands-free on your phone, tablet and computer (although that's now changed – see box on opposite page). This is undoubtedly useful for tasks such as checking ingredients, looking up addresses and settling pub arguments, but did you realise that your every spoken request is being recorded and stored online by Google? No, we're not just being paranoid – visit your Voice & Audio Activity page at history.google.com/history/audio (use bit.ly/audio384 for short) and you'll find an archive of all the questions and commands you've addressed to Google since you started using the feature. What's more, when you click the Play button below an entry, you'll hear a recording of your voice (which always sound disconcertingly different to how you imagine!).



Every command addressed to 'OK Google' is recorded and stored online

Although Google claims it needs to store these recordings so that it can "recognise your voice and improve speech recognition", it's still rather creepy to have everything you say hoarded in this way – even if it's true that only you (and Google) can access the audio. To prevent this unauthorised

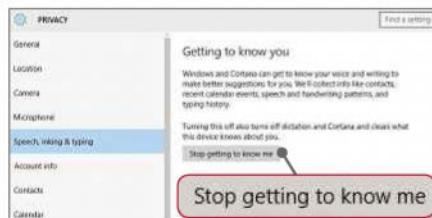


Use the 'Activity controls' to stop Google recording what you say

eavesdropping, go to the 'Activity controls' page at bit.ly/controls384 and turn off the 'Your voices and search commands' option. Google will continue to store audio data, but anonymously, so it's not identified with you. You should also delete your past recordings from the Voice & Audio Activity page.

Stop Cortana 'getting to know you'

Cortana is one of the cleverest features in Windows 10, but the voice assistant raises privacy concerns. It's great that you can summon her simply by saying "Hey Cortana", but this also means she's effectively listening at all times, awaiting your next command. Microsoft denies that there is anything invasive about this, saying in its Cortana FAQ that she "uses your voice data to learn how you speak and to correctly recognise and execute your voice commands" (bit.ly/cortana384). However, it adds that "this information is also used to improve Microsoft products and services that use speech recognition", which suggests that what happens in Cortana doesn't



Tell Cortana to stop getting to know you to prevent her from eavesdropping

stay in Cortana.

If you're unnerved by this cavalier attitude to recording your voice, go to Start, Settings, Privacy, click the option 'Speech, inking and typing' and select 'Stop getting to know me' button. This will clear the information gathered by Cortana and Windows 10, and also turn off the personal assistant and dictation functions. Cortana also uploads your voice data to the web, which you can delete by going to Bing's Personalisation page (bit.ly/bing384) and clicking the Clear button under the 'Other Cortana data...' option.

Other Cortana Data and Personalized Speech, Inking and Typing

When Cortana is enabled, we upload some info from your device(s), such as your calendar, contacts, location triggered by Cortana, and browsing history to provide Cortana recommendations. Your calendar and contacts are also uploaded when you enable personalized speech, inking and typing. Clearing this info will affect Microsoft's ability to provide Cortana recommendations and/or personalize your speech, inking and typing experience on your device(s).

Clear

You can delete voice data that Cortana has recorded and uploaded to the web

Control when Siri listens to you

"Siri will now be listening in at ALL times," screamed a Mail Online headline on 9 September (bit.ly/sirimail384), reporting that in iOS 9, "Siri will be permanently switched on and listening for the voice command, even if you're [sic] phone is on the other side of the room". This isn't quite as sinister as it sounds, because it refers to the fact that you can now use Apple's voice assistant simply by saying "Hey Siri" rather than needing to press a button to activate her. The feature was actually introduced in iOS 8, but it only worked when your iPhone or iPad was plugged in to charge.

Apple has admitted that it stores your voice data for up to two years, and even shares it with third parties to improve the speech recognition but, unlike Google and Microsoft, it does so anonymously without linking the recordings to your Apple ID, email





address or other account. That's all very well, you may think, but it's still passing on my ramblings without my permission. In fact, Apple makes clear in its iOS licence agreement that "by using Siri, you agree and consent to Apple's and its subsidiaries' and agents' transmission, collection, maintenance, processing, and use of this information, including your voice input". Moreover, the feature is disabled by default and very easy to turn off if you do activate it: just go to Settings, General, Siri and move the Allow Hey Siri slider over to the left.



Hey Siri is disabled by default and needs to be activated and set up manually

Stop websites accessing your microphone

Certain websites, for example those that let you make video calls over the internet or search using your voice, ask for permission to access your microphone. This is understandable because they wouldn't work without it, but there's a small risk that by granting them access you could allow less trustworthy sites to listen to you through your browser. To stop this happening in Chrome, go to Settings, 'Show advanced settings' and click the 'Content settings' button under Privacy. Scroll down to Microphone and select 'Do not allow sites to access your microphone' then click 'Manage exceptions'. Click the 'x' next to any site you want to forbid access to your



Prevent Chrome from letting unauthorised websites access your microphone

microphone to remove it from the list.

In Firefox, type about:permissions into the address bar, press Enter and select a site in the list on the left. Click the 'Use the Microphone' drop-down menu on the right and choose Block or 'Always ask'.



Firefox lets you control which sites have access to your microphone

You should also prevent Flash content from accessing your microphone. This can't be controlled using your browser's own settings; instead, you need to go to Flash Player's Website Privacy Panel (bit.ly/flash384), select 'Always deny'

and remove any unwanted sites from the permitted list.

Stop your smart TV collecting voice data

Earlier this year, it was reported that Samsung Smart TV viewers who use the Voice Recognition feature are being 'listened to' by their sets, and their voice data shared with Samsung and a third-party service provider (bit.ly/samsung384). As with similar tools, there is good reason for this: the third party in this case is speech-recognition specialist Nuance Communications, which processes the data.

However, some users made comparisons with Orwell's 1984 because of a section of Samsung's privacy policy that stated: "If your spoken words include personal or other sensitive information, that information will be among the data captured and transmitted to a third party". Happily, Samsung has since amended both the policy and the feature, so that voice commands are only collected when you click the activation button on your remote control and speak into the microphone. If you're still worried, just go to Settings, Smart Features and disable Voice Recognition. Samsung says you may still be able to control your TV using certain predefined voice commands. ■



Samsung changed its privacy policy in response to concerns about 'listening' TVs

GOOGLE DROPS OK GOOGLE FROM CHROME



Since Chrome 35 was released in May 2014, you've been able to search the web without clicking or typing by saying "OK Google" when you open a new tab or the Google homepage. Well, you can't anymore, because Google has decided to drop the feature from Chrome 46 since it found that very few people were using it. You'll still be able to use voice search by clicking the microphone symbol (as was the case before), but barking "OK Google!" at your PC in an increasingly frustrated tone will only raise your blood pressure.

However, the feature will continue to work on phones, tablets and Chromebooks.





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3	plusnet	Plusnet: Broadband	£9.99 (£2.50 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£30.00
4	Sky	Sky: Broadband	£10.00 (HALF PRICE for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£60.00

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

*First-year cost does not include line rental. Cost is calculated at monthly price x12 with all introductory offers subtracted. Additional charges incurred outside of free inclusive calls not included in first-year cost. ** Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 3 November 2015.

Ofcom

Broadband Genie's helpline is powered by Simplify Digital, the Ofcom-accredited switching service

In the next issue of our sister title
Computeractive...

**SNEAK
PREVIEW!**

Computer
active

- **WINDOWS 10: THE 15 BEST NEW PROGRAMS** - New problem-fixing tools and your favourite software revamped
- Security tools that do more harm than good

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- Which websites sell your personal data?
- **PLUS:** Tips & fixes for Outlook.com, iPad, Skype, Facebook and more...

**On sale
Weds
25 Nov**



Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your computer by taking our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you unravel our browser-themed word search and guess our book-title emoji?

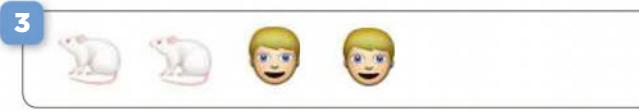
WEB USER WORD SEARCH

Can you find the following browsers in the grid on the right? Names may appear vertically, horizontally or diagonally, and forwards or backwards

CHROME
EDGE
FIREFOX
LUNASCAPE
MAXTHON
OPERA
PALE MOON
SAFARI
SEAMONKEY
VIVALDI



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE BOOK TITLES FROM THE EMOJI?



Get the answers online at www.webuser.co.uk/quiz384

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 5 STM Dux iPad Air 2 cases

STM's most rugged case ever, the Dux provides best-in-class protection for your iPad Air 2. The magnetic closure saves battery life and folds perfectly into modes for viewing and typing, while tough, reinforced corners protect your iPad from inadvertent drops. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with "Dux" in the subject line. For more information visit stmbags.com.au and follow @_stmbags on Twitter.



WORTH
£49.95
EACH

WIN 1 OF 3 Synology RT1900ac routers

Everything that's good about Synology's networked storage devices has been successfully transferred to its new router, the RT1900ac, which we awarded the maximum five stars in our recent review (see Issue 382). It's very fast and has an interface that's wonderfully easy to use. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'Synology' in the subject line. For more information visit synology.com and follow @synologyuk on Twitter.



WORTH
£108
EACH



Get more tools on Chrome's New Tab page | bit.ly/flipper384

Flipper is a Chrome add-on that replaces Google's New Tab page with a more useful and attractive alternative. Here's what you need to know

Chrome's New Tab page contains the Google search box, thumbnails of your recently accessed sites and a bookmarks bar. It's functional, but bland. Flipper, on the other hand, is a vastly more stylish alternative that launches your favourite sites from customisable 'flippers' that revolve when you hover over them. You can add as many sites as you like, and group them together into

themed collections. You can change the background, add your own wallpaper, customise the look of the page and even store notes and reminders.

If you prefer to launch sites from your bookmarks, rather than using the flippers, there's a Minimal Mode you can turn on from the sidebar that just displays the background, current time and your name.



1 Install the add-on and open a new tab, then Choose your language and click Next. Click 'Start right away' and you'll be prompted to choose a wallpaper for the New Tab page background. **1** Just click one you'd like to apply - you can always change this later in the Personalisations menu. Click Next **2** to start using Flipper.



2 Flippers - interactive buttons - are displayed in groups. **1** By default, there are Popular, Awesomeness, Fun and Cool groupings. Move between these by clicking and dragging sideways, by using the arrows on the left and right of the screen **2** or by clicking the dots below. **3** Click a flipper to open a new tab.



3 To add new flippers, click the plus sign at the top left. This opens a search sidebar **1** and the Flipper Store. **2** Move your mouse over a suggested flipper and the site address appears at the bottom. **3** Click the flipper to launch that site. To add it to the page, click the green Install link. **4**



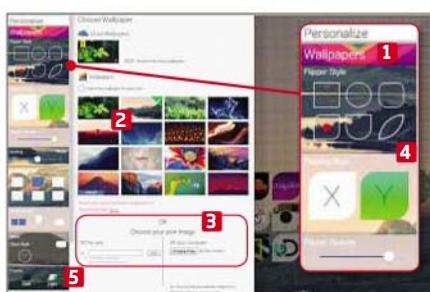
4 To remove a flipper from the page, click and drag it downwards to the bin that appears. To make a new basic flipper, click the Create Custom Flipper bar on the left. **1** Choose the front and back images **2** and enter the address for the site your flipper will be linked to, **2** then pick one of the front and back designs. **3** Hover your mouse over the preview **4** to view the flipper in action.



5 You can create more sophisticated custom flippers using the Creatica tool. Enter the front and back text, and choose a colour. **1** Enter the address for the site your flipper will be linked to, **2** then pick one of the front and back designs. **3** Hover your mouse over the preview **4** to view the flipper in action.



6 To customise the page layout and title, click the Edit button on the left. If you don't want a title, just delete it. 1 To make a group the default home screen, click the button under it. 2 Hover over a flipper to delete it, 3 change its name and address 4 and move it to a different group. 5



7 To change the look of the page, click the Personalize button. Click Wallpapers 1 to change the background. You can pick one of Flipper's images 2 or use one from the web or your computer. 3 You can change the design of the flippers, the flipping style and more, 4 and use a light or dark theme. 5



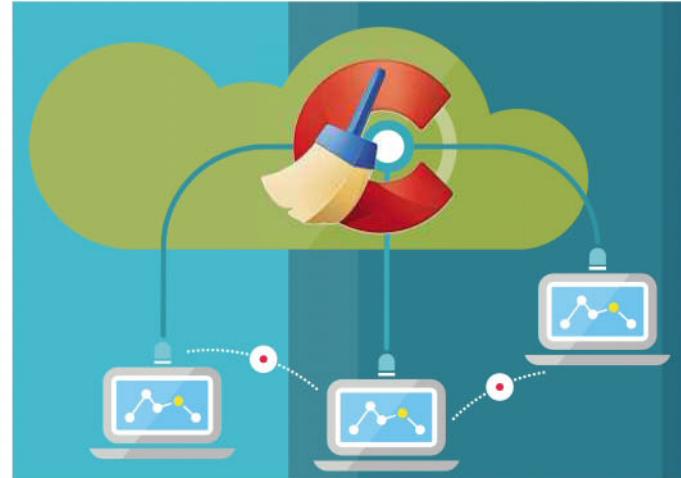
8 Click the Apps button 1 to view any Chrome apps you have installed. The button below 2 opens the default Chrome New Tab page. The Notes/Reminder button 3 displays a pop-out notebook for lists and reminders. 4 Right-click to paste content, spellcheck and change the writing direction. 5



Optimise your friends' and family's computers remotely

CCleaner Cloud: www.ccleaner.com | 15 mins | XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10

Piriform's CCleaner (bit.ly/cclean384) has long been a *Web User* favourite. It helps to speed up your PC by clearing out temporary files and uninstalling unwanted software. Now, the UK software firm has introduced CCleaner Cloud, which lets you perform all the same tasks on your PC from wherever you are by simply logging on to www.ccleaner.com. The free version works with up to three computers, so you can remotely clean not only your own PC but also those of your friends and family. The service incorporates the key features of Piriform's tools Speccy and Defraggler, so you can check a PC's hardware specification and defrag its hard drive remotely, too. In this Workshop, we show you how to sign up to CCleaner Cloud and install the program on someone else's PC without giving away any login details. Once connected, you can delete temporary files, uninstall programs and install pending Windows updates, hopefully improving the PC's performance and stability in the process.



Let's get you started – just add your first computer by downloading and installing CCleaner Cloud.

1. Download [Download CCleaner Cloud for Windows](#)
2. Install [Follow the instructions on your computer](#)
3. Get started! [Start managing from My Computers](#)

1 [Download CCleaner Cloud Installer for Windows](#)
CCleanerCloudSetup.exe - 1.08MB
[Download an Installer Linked to Your Account](#)

1 Visit www.ccleaner.com and sign up for a free CCleaner Cloud account. To clean your own PC remotely, download the installer **1** and follow the instructions to link your computer to your account. A notification appears in your taskbar to show that your PC is linked to CCleaner Cloud.

Hello Edward Munn!
A new computer WEBUSER has been linked to your account and needs your confirmation.

1 [Confirm](#) [Delete](#)

Installer Settings

How many times this installer can be used? Unlimited
When should the installer expire? Never Expires
[Download](#)

3 This option doesn't require login details, so you can share the file with friends and family to clean their PCs remotely without giving away your password. Once the installer has been used, a notification **1** appears on CCleaner Cloud asking you to confirm the newly linked PC.

CCleaner Cloud

My Computers 14 day(s) left in trial - click to upgrade

Computers Events

0/1

Computer Name	Status	Operating System	IP Address	Group
WORK-PC	1 ONLINE	Windows 7 Professional 64-bit SP1	83.244.234.228	My Computers

Actions: Select Action [+ Add Group](#) [+ Add Computer \(9 left\)](#)

2 [+ Add Computer](#)

2 Visit www.ccleaner.com/login and sign in to see a list of your connected computers. **1** To connect more PCs, click 'Add computer' **2** and choose the option to 'Download an Installer Linked to Your Account'.

CCleaner Cloud

My Computer WEBUSER 14 day(s) left in trial - click to upgrade Edward Munn

WEBUSER OFFLINE

Windows 10 Pro 64-bit
Intel Core i5 3317U @ 1.70GHz
4GB RAM
320 GB Dual-Channel DDR3 @ 799MHz (11-11-11-28)
Motherboard
Microsoft Corporation Surface with Windows 10 Pro (SOCKET 9)
Graphics
Dell Inc. P17 Monitor (1280x1024@60Hz)
Intel HD Graphics 4000 (Microsoft)

4 minutes ago - Internet connection lost
35 minutes ago - Registry Analyzed
49 minutes ago - Analyzed C:
1 hour ago - Registry Analyzed
1 hour ago - Started CCleaner Cloud Agent

Summary Hardware Software CCleaner Defraggler Tools Events Options

1 **2**

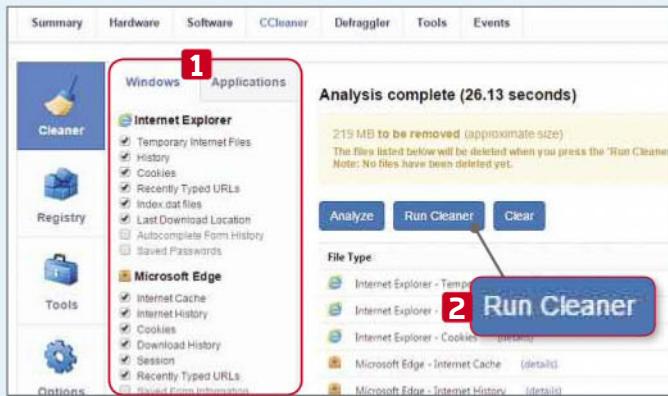
4 Check that the PC you want to clean is online and click its name. A summary of important information is displayed, including the PC's operating system **1** and hardware specification. **2** Click CCleaner, then click Analyze to see how much space can be freed up using the default configuration.



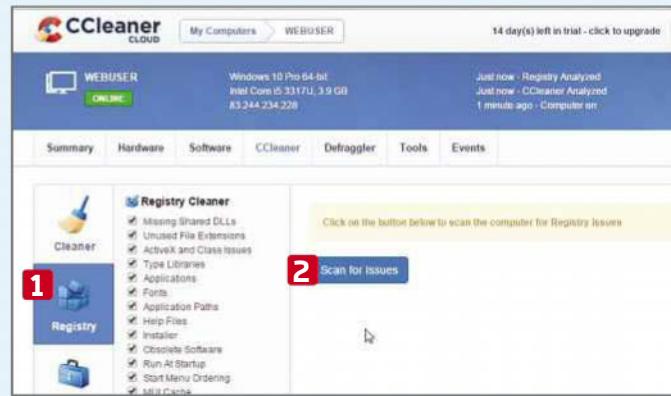
EXPERT TIP

Edward Munn says

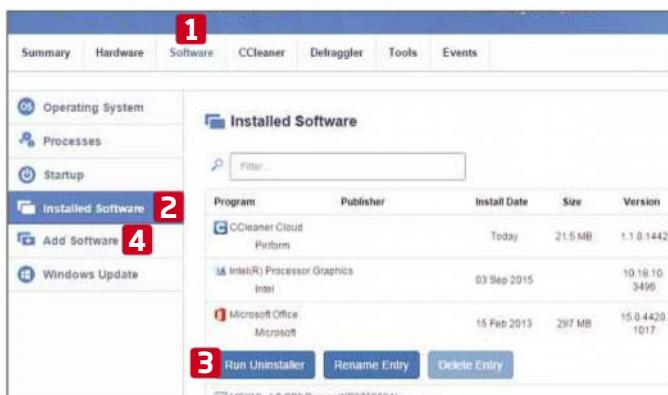
Your friends and family can disconnect their PCs from your account at any time by uninstalling the CCleaner Cloud application. If they are revoking access because they want to use the application themselves, they can right-click CCleaner Cloud and select Preferences to unlink the computer and log in with another account.



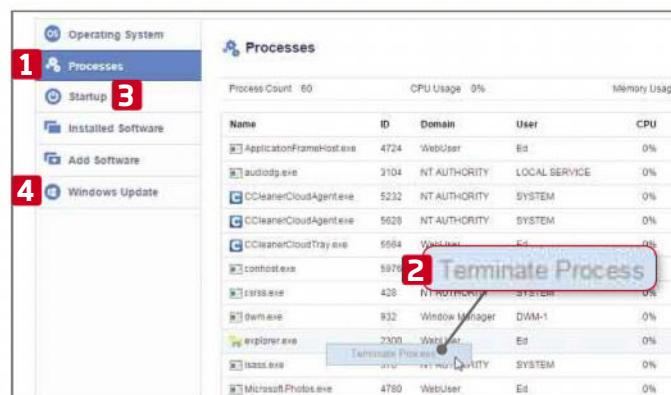
5 To exclude files and folders from the cleaning process, untick individual boxes in the Windows and Applications tabs **1** as necessary, then click Run Cleaner. **2** CCleaner shows the amount of drive space saved and a summary of the files deleted.



6 Click Registry, **1** then 'Scan for Issues' **2** to use CCleaner's Registry cleaner. If you opt to fix the selected problems, the Registry will automatically back up to the remote PC's CCleaner Cloud folder in Program Files.



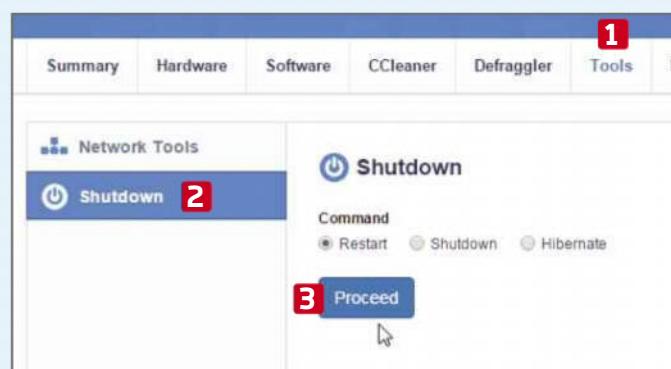
7 Select Software **1** and Installed Software **2** to see a list of programs installed on the PC. To uninstall a program, click it and select Run Uninstaller. **3** To install software remotely, click Add Software **4** and choose from the available programs or use your own MSI installer from Dropbox.



8 Click Processes **1** to see a summary of all the processes currently running on the remote PC. To stop any process, right-click it and select Terminate Process. **2** Click Startup **3** to manage the PC's Startup programs or select Windows Update **4** to install pending Windows updates.



9 Defraggler **1** helps your PC run faster by organising fragmented files on its hard drive. Select a drive **2** and click Analyze **3** to see how fragmented its files are. If the percentage of fragmented files is high, click Defrag **4** to clean up the hard drive.



10 Once you've finished cleaning the PC, you can use CCleaner Cloud to shut it down or restart it remotely. Select Tools, **1** then Shutdown. **2** Select the appropriate Command (Restart, Shutdown or Hibernate), then click Proceed **3** and Yes.



Create time-bending special effects in mobile videos

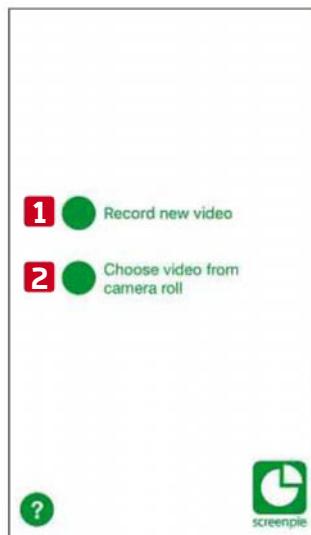
Some of the latest smartphones come with impressive video effects – such as slow motion – but even if your phone provides these tricks, it takes forward planning to turn them on in time to capture the moment. Screenpie lets you

Screenpie: www.screenpie.com | **10 mins**

apply effects after you've shot your video, so there's no need to worry about the settings while you're filming. You can slow down, speed up or reverse your videos in a few simple taps.



iOS, (Android version coming soon)



1 The app can record a new video **1** for use with Screenpie or work with an existing video from your device. **2** You can only use an existing video if it's shorter than 60 seconds. In either case, you'll be asked for your permission to give the app access to your camera or videos.



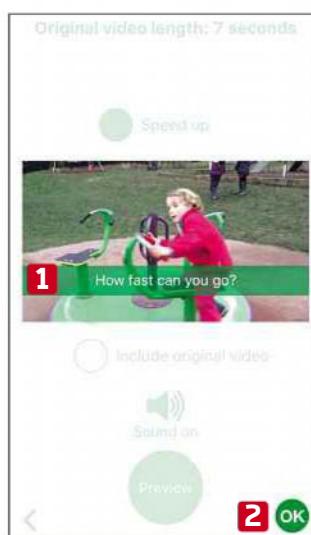
2 If you're choosing an existing video, click the Play button to preview it, **1** then click Choose **2** if you're happy with your selection. When recording a new video, click the Record button to start. This will turn into a timer so you can make sure the video doesn't get too long.



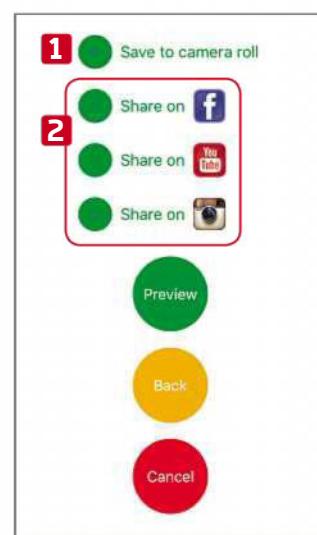
3 Tap the circles to choose whether to 'Speed up' **1** or 'Slow down' **2** your video. A 'Total video length' option appears, so you can choose how long the final video will be. A slowed-down video will be longer while a speeded up video will be shorter.



4 You can also choose whether to reverse the video, **1** which will play the action backwards. You can do this without selecting a speed-up or slow-down option, or you can make a reversed video with either of these options also selected. **2**



5 Click 'Add caption' to display a green bar across the middle of the video. **1** Tap it to type your own caption. You can drag the bar to a new location, such as the top or bottom of the video, if you don't want it to obscure any action going on in the centre. Tap OK. **2**



6 If you choose the option to 'Include original video' it will play through the original first, then apply the effect. Tap Preview. The finished video will have a small Screenpie watermark. After previewing, choose whether to save **1** or share **2** your clip.



Manage your browser's privacy settings

Click&Clean lets you clear all your private browsing data with a single click and it can even be configured to do this automatically when you close your browser.

In this Workshop, we show you how to use Click&Clean's

Click&Clean: www.hotcleaner.com | **5 mins**

most useful features with Firefox, but the extension is also available for Chrome and works in much the same way in both browsers.

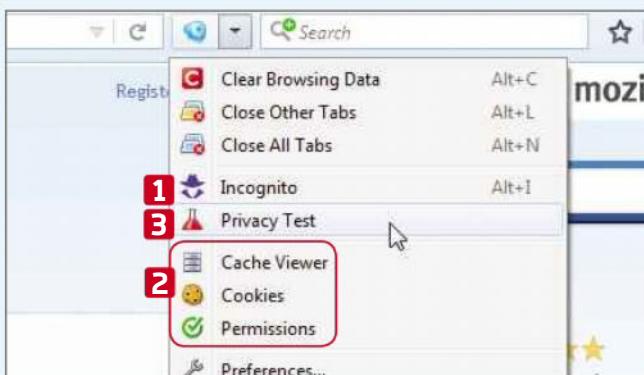


Chrome, Firefox



1 Install Click&Clean, restart Firefox and a toilet-roll icon appears in the toolbar. **1** Click this icon to clear your browsing data and the usual Firefox menu appears, letting you select the time range you want to delete. **2** Click Details **3** to choose the elements you want to clear.

2 Click Clear Now and Firefox clears your browsing history based on your selections. Next, click Click&Clean's drop-down button. **1** You'll see shortcuts to close all your tabs **2** or all tabs except for the current one. **3** Both these options also have keyboard shortcuts.



3 The drop-down menu also has shortcuts for opening a new private window **1** and for using Firefox's built-in tools to manage your cache, cookies and site permissions **2**. Click Privacy Test **3** to see a summary of the information that you reveal when you visit different websites.

4 Click Preferences to see Click&Clean's options menu. Tick 'Clear browsing data when browser closes' **1** to perform this action when you close your browser. Untick 'Ask me before clearing private data' **2** to automatically clear your data based on the last-used configuration.

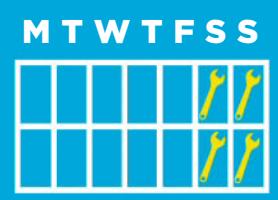


5 You can opt to run an external application such as CCleaner when you clear your browsing data **1** or close Firefox. **2** The command to run CCleaner is automatically filled along with '/auto', **3** which runs the application silently using your current saved options.

6 Click&Clean's advanced options let you remove Flash cookies. **1** You can also opt to close all tabs (or all tabs except the current one) when you clear your browsing data. **2** To restore Click&Clean's settings to their original state, click Reset. **3**

Weekend Project

Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance



How to...

Get more storage on your mobile devices

Don't get stuck with a low-capacity mobile device – **Wayne Williams** shows you how to get lots of extra storage on your phone and tablet

While some Android devices let you boost their storage with microSD cards, there are many that don't – Samsung's Galaxy S6 being a prime example. Apple's iPhone doesn't let you expand your storage in this way, either. If you want to ensure you have enough space for all your apps, photos, videos and music, you ideally need to buy a device with 64GB or 128GB capacity, though that can be expensive. Fortunately, you don't need to purchase a top-of-the-range device to avoid running out of space – you can increase your existing phone or tablet's storage in various ways, some of which are entirely free.



Add a larger memory card

A lot of smartphones and tablets let you increase their available storage by using a larger SD or microSD card. The location of the slot – and type of card – will vary depending on the device. The maximum microSD capacity supported is typically either 32GB or 64GB (you can view your phone's specifications on the manufacturer's website). Budget phones are likely to have restrictions, while

high-end devices will probably accept cards up to 128GB in size. It's worth checking on mobile-phone forums to find out the experience of other phone owners who have used large memory cards.

Add a storage drive

Smaller-capacity Apple devices can quickly fill up: Live Photos on the iPhone 6s take up more storage than regular photos and certain apps – games in

particular – can be sizable. iKlips, from Adam Elements (www.adamelements.com), is a flash drive designed for iPhones, iPads and iPods. It lets you add between 16 and 256GB of additional mobile storage to your device and, thanks to the Lightning/USB 3.0 dual interface, it also lets you easily share data between other iOS devices, PCs and Macs. The drive plugs straight into your device's Lightning port for when you need to save



or access your photos, videos (including large ones shot in 4K on the iPhone 6s or 6s Plus), audio and other files. Adam Elements says the drive is extremely energy-efficient and has "no noticeable effect" on your device's battery life.

iKlips is available in grey, gold, rose gold, silver and red, so you can pick one that matches your device, or just looks good. The drive has a lightweight aluminium body and the clip on its back makes it easy to attach to your pocket or bag so you don't lose it.

The drive is available from Amazon in five storage capacities: 16GB, 32GB, 64GB, 128GB and 256GB (priced at: £49, £69, £89, £159, and £359 respectively). You can also get it from other retailers, including Expansys (www.expansys.com) and Mobile Fun (www.mobilefun.co.uk).

See our Mini Workshop, below, to see

how to use iKlips to get additional storage on your iPhone.

Another drive worth considering is the SanDisk Connect Wireless Stick

(bit.ly/sandisk384), which works with the iPhone, iPad and Android devices, and is available in a choice of four fixed capacities - 16GB, 32GB, 64GB or 128GB. It lets you access and share content with up to three phones and tablets simultaneously, and has its own built-in Wi-Fi connection. Prices start from £19.99 (16GB) and rise to £69.99 (128GB).

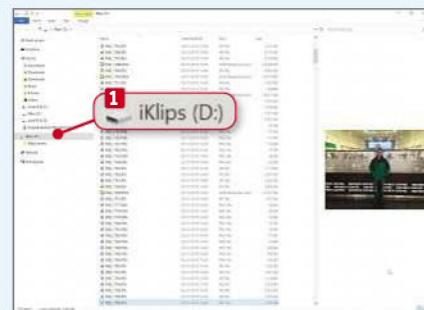
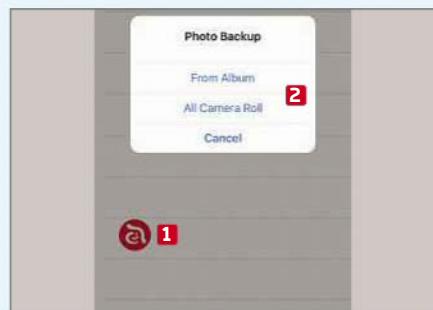
There are other similar drives available, including the AirStash Wireless (www.airstash.com). This looks like a chunky flash drive but you connect to it via the device's built-in wireless network and stream content using the free app or the web interface. Storage is provided by an SD card, so you can easily add more space and swap cards as required. It will work with any iPhone, iPad or Android phone or tablet, and is available to buy through Amazon (bit.ly/stash384) for around £100.

If you require a lot more storage and aren't so worried about portability,

iKlips is like a USB memory stick but it connects to the iPhone's Lightning port



MINI WORKSHOP | Use iKlips to get additional storage on your iPhone or iPad



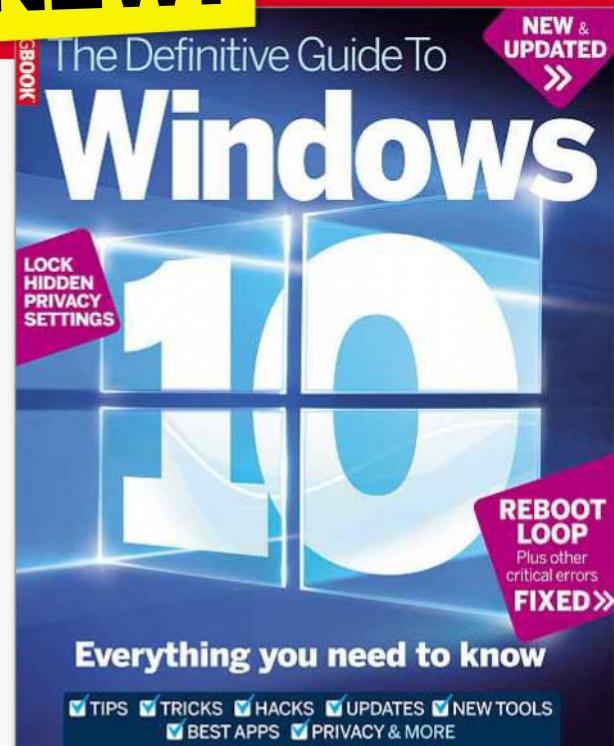
1 Begin by downloading the free iKlips app. Go to bit.ly/iklipsapp384 in your browser or scan the QR code on the packaging. Next, plug the drive into the Lightning port on your iPhone or iPad. **1** The installed app should start automatically. Tap the Allow button **2** in the message that appears.

2 The app has buttons for Photos, Music, Documents, Movies and Finder. There's also a red button **1** that lets you access other options, such as camera and contact backup. To copy images from your phone, select Photos on the main screen, then tap the flower icon and choose what to back up (an album or the camera roll). **2**

3 To transfer backed-up content to your PC (or to copy content from your PC to iKlips), unplug the drive from your phone, remove the cap from the USB end and plug iKlips into your computer. It will appear as a drive in File Explorer **1** and you'll be able to drag content to and from it.

WebUser Bookstore

NEW!



THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WINDOWS 10

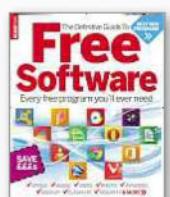
This 148-page book is the only guide you need to use Microsoft's new operating system. You'll learn how to master all the new tools, lock Microsoft's weak privacy settings and stop future updates wrecking your PC. It includes fixes for all the problems and bugs that have appeared in Windows 10 since it launched. Plus, you'll discover how to make Cortana understand you, remove the apps you hate, fix the dreaded Reboot Loop problem, master the new Edge browser, and stop Microsoft sharing your personal info. Don't use Windows 10 without this book by your side!

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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO FREE SOFTWARE

Free software can be a worry. Is it as good as a paid-for package? Will it sneak junk on to your PC? Does it nag you to update to a premium version? In our new 148-page book *The Definitive Guide to Free Software*, we recommend only the best free programs that deliver high-quality features and no nasty surprises.



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RASPBERRY PI FOR KIDS

The Raspberry Pi is the incredible £20 British computer that's taking the world by storm. It's ideal for children of all ages to experiment, play games and learn valuable skills. We've updated this 148-page book for 2015 to include instructions on mastering the new Pi models (A+ and B+).



BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON
[at bit.ly/raspbook](http://bit.ly/raspbook)

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO GOOGLE HIDDEN TOOLS

In the 164-page *The Definitive Guide to Google Hidden Tools*, we lift the lid on Google's most popular tools with more than 430 ways to make them more efficient, useful and tailored to your needs. These include clever add-ons for Chrome, amazing free apps for Android and stunning sights in Google Maps.



BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON
[at bit.ly/wugoogle](http://bit.ly/wugoogle)



USB OTG Checker

USB OTG System

Press the Check button to start scan your device OS. The result show you either your device Firmware and API can support USB OTG function or not.

Result

Your Device OS Support USB OTG! You can try to proceed USB OTG Signal test to check either your device was load with USB OTG Kernel or Driver.

Use the USB OTG Checker to ensure your Android device is compatible before spending any money

Seagate's Wireless Plus (bit.ly/seagate384, 89 x 127 x 21mm) is available in 500GB, 1TB and 2TB versions, and has a built-in wireless network and USB 3 port. There are free Seagate Media apps available for iOS and Android devices. The capacity of the drive means it's more expensive than the other products, and you should expect to pay around £170 for



Inateck make a hub that can bring a range of different ports to an OTG-compatible Android device

the 2TB model from Ebuyer (bit.ly/ebuy384).

USB OTG storage

Many Android phones support USB OTG (On The Go), which lets you plug a storage drive directly into the device. To check if your phone supports this, download the free USB OTG Checker from Google Play (bit.ly/otgchk384) to your phone. Assuming it works fine, you'll need to buy an OTG adaptor, such as the Inateck HB3001G OTG Hub with Card Reader (bit.ly/inat384). This three-port hub costs £10.99 from Amazon (bit.ly/amazon384) and you can use it to add a USB storage drive or a microSD card if

your phone doesn't already have a built-in microSD slot.

Choose cloud storage wisely

There are lots of online storage services that you can copy your files to, including Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, Dropbox and Box. Each offers a reasonable amount of free space; if you're concerned about running out of storage, you can buy more space or divide your files among multiple services.

Apple iCloud links to iPhones and iPads, but you only get 5GB of storage for free, which will soon get used up. Additional space isn't all that expensive – from 79p a month for 50GB, rising to £6.99 a month for 1TB – but there are better free options.

If you mostly want extra space to back up photos you take with your Apple or Android phone or tablet, consider signing up to Flickr (www.flickr.com). You get 1TB of storage for free and the app will back up your photos automatically. Google Photos (photos.google.com) lets you store unlimited high-quality photos and videos in the cloud, and is available for PC, iOS and Android. It backs up your photos automatically, and the Assistant feature includes some great tools to make interesting creations from your photos, including animations, collections of images and collages.

We show you how to set it up in our Mini Workshop, below. ■



MINI WORKSHOP | Move your device's pictures and videos to Google Photos

1 The app displays thumbnails of images and videos uploaded to the cloud. **1** Tap the menu icon **2** to open the menu. From here, you can access the Assistant, Photos and Collections.



The plus symbol **3** lets you create a new album, movie, story, animation or collage. Tap the three-dot icon **4** to change the app layout.

2 Tap an image to open it. From here, you can share the picture **1** via all the usual methods including email, Twitter, and Facebook. Tap the Edit button **2** to make changes, apply filters and rotate the picture. The Info button **3** contains details about the image, including a map of where it was taken. You can bin **4** unwanted photos.



3 Tap the magnifying glass icon on the thumbnail page to open the search window. You can look for an image by name or subject ('Christmas' or 'beach', for example). **1** You can also browse by Places, Things or Types (videos, creations or Google Drive). **2** The app automatically tags and categorises all uploaded content.



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Web User's Top Tips

Is your hard drive running short of space? Our experts show how to free up gigabytes of extra storage

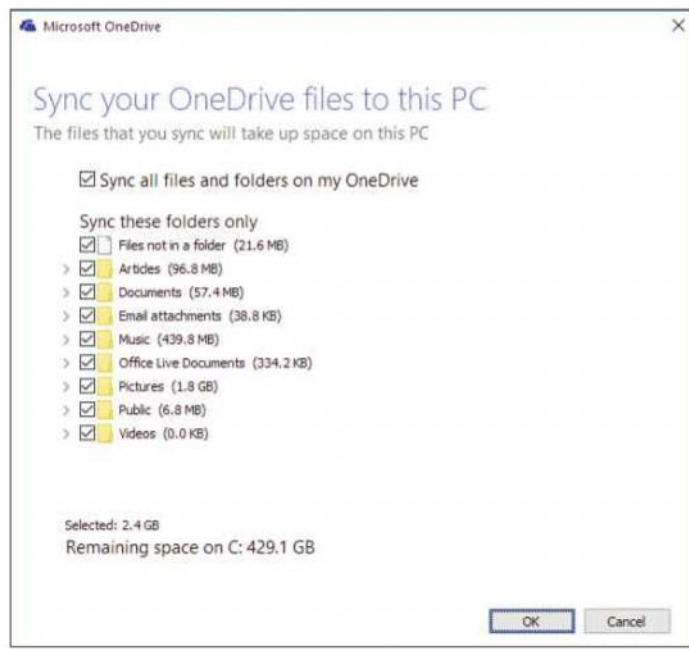
TOP TIPS FOR RECLAIMING HARD-DRIVE SPACE

Stop OneDrive syncing

OneDrive is built into Windows 8 and 10, and any files stored in your online space are mirrored on your PC's hard drive. While this is convenient, it takes up room on your hard drive. If you opt out of syncing certain folders, you could free up gigabytes of space.

Click the up arrow in the notification area of the taskbar, then right-click the OneDrive icon and select Settings. Select the 'Choose folders' tab and click the 'Choose folders' button. Clear the ticks against folders that you want to keep online, but don't need on your hard drive. If your phone automatically uploads photos to the Pictures folder using the OneDrive app, for example, clear the tick to stop them downloading to the PC and using up space. Keep them online only and just download the ones you really need.

Clear these ticks to stop OneDrive storing files on the hard drive



Remove the Hibernate option

A PC running Windows has four modes: on, off, sleeping or hibernating. Hibernation is found among the power and shutdown options on the Start menu, or it may be activated automatically when a laptop's battery runs out of power. When the computer hibernates, the system state and memory contents are saved to the hard drive in a file called 'hyperfil.sys' and the PC is powered off. When you switch it back on, the PC starts exactly as it was before and you can continue with whatever you were doing.

The hibernate file is as big as the PC's memory, which is 4GB or more. Turn off hibernation to delete hyperfil.sys

and release the space. Find Command Prompt on the Start menu (in Windows 10 you'll find it in 'All apps', then Windows System), right-click it and select 'Run as administrator'. At the command prompt, type powercfg /h off to turn off hibernation. Change off to on if you want to re-enable it. This does not affect Sleep mode.



If you see words that look like they've been typed in a typewriter, follow the instructions and type them exactly as they appear, paying close attention to spaces and punctuation.

If you don't use Hibernate, turn off your PC to gain gigabytes of extra space

Compress rarely used files

Any file or folder can be turned into a compressed Zip archive that takes up less space. Just right-click the file or folder and select 'Send to, Compressed (zipped) folder'. Some files compress a lot; others compress very little. Use it on files you rarely access, then delete the originals.

Clean up regularly

Junk files build up rapidly on hard drives and should be cleaned out periodically to free the space they occupy. Find Disk Cleanup on the Start menu (in Windows 10 it's in 'All apps', Windows Administrative Tools) and run it. When it's finished scanning, click 'Clean up system files', which scans again and includes even more junk. Tick everything and click OK.

Uninstall large programs

Some software, especially games, can be huge, so if you no longer use them, you should remove them to reclaim the drive space. Open 'Programs and features' in the Control Panel. Expand



the window to show the Size column (if it is not already visible) and click the heading to sort your applications in order of size. See if you can live without some of the biggest ones and, if you can, uninstall them.

In Windows 10, go to Start, Settings, System, 'Apps & features'. There is an option to sort the apps by size with the biggest at the top of the list. Click any apps you don't need and use the uninstall option.

Move personal folders off your drive

Depending on how you use your personal folders, you may find that the Documents folder doesn't take up much space on your hard drive, but Music, Pictures and Videos can use a lot. If you have a second hard drive, such as an external USB hard drive that is always plugged in and powered up, you could move one or more of your personal folders to it to recover the internal hard-drive space that they occupy.

Open an Explorer window, select the drive you want to move a folder to, and create a new folder. Find the folder that you want to move (Videos, for example) in Explorer's left pane, then right-click it and select Properties. Select the Location tab and click the Move button. Select the external drive and the folder you want to move it to.



Move the Documents and other personal folders to another drive

Use online storage without syncing

Many companies provide free online storage, such as Google Drive (drive.google.com), Dropbox (www.dropbox.com), Box (www.box.com) and others. You could quite easily accumulate 30GB or more of free online storage and this can be used to store files that you rarely access, such as old photos and videos. Do not install the app to sync the online contents with a folder on your PC; just use a web browser to go to the website and upload your files. You can then delete them from your hard drive to free up the space.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Reduce (or stop) System Restore

System Restore is an extremely useful tool for fixing faults with Windows, which can roll your failing PC back to where it was when it was last working well. However, if you rarely have problems (some people have never used System Restore) then it is simply a waste of drive space. To find out how much space it is using, open Control Panel, click System (in 'Small icons' view), click 'System protection' on the left and click the Configure button in the window that opens.

A slider determines the maximum drive space to use for System Restore and this is often set to several gigabytes. Drag the slider all the way to the left to minimise the space used and only one restore point will ever be saved. There is also an option to completely disable system protection to free up even more space. This is risky, though, because you will not be able to use it to help fix any future problems you might encounter.

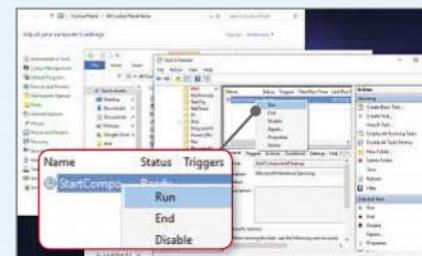


Delete all restore points and disable system protection to free up space

Clean the WinSxS folder

WinSxS is a folder in C:\Windows that can grow very large, often occupying many gigabytes of space. It contains backups for Windows system files, among other things, but not everything it holds is essential to the running of your PC. You should never try to manually delete files in WinSxS, but there is a Windows tool to clear out unnecessary files and just keep the essentials.

Go to the Control Panel and open Administrative tools (from the 'Small icons' view). Double-click Task Scheduler or Schedule Tasks and, in the left panel, expand the folders to



Keep your WinSxS folder clear of junk with the Task Scheduler

go to Microsoft, Windows, Servicing. In the middle pane, look for StartComponentCleanup. Right-click it and select Run. It might take a long time to finish, so do it when you have an hour or so to spare.

Move OneDrive

You can keep copies of all your OneDrive files on your PC without using up space on your PC's internal hard drive. The OneDrive folder can be synced to an external drive such as a USB hard drive or USB memory stick instead.

External storage is often formatted using the FAT system, but you have to use NTFS to sync OneDrive. Be careful here, because all the files on your storage device will be erased. Open Explorer, select This PC, right-click the drive you want to use and select Format. Set the file system to NTFS and tick Quick Format. After it's formatted, open the drive in Explorer and create a folder for OneDrive.

In Windows 8.1, right-click OneDrive in Explorer and select Properties. Click the Location tab, click Move and select the folder you created on the external drive. In Windows 10, right-click the OneDrive icon in the notification area of the taskbar and select Settings. On the Settings tab, click the Unlink OneDrive button. Open Explorer and select OneDrive, then click 'Move to' on the Home tab of Explorer's toolbar and select 'Choose location', Move. After moving the folder, return to OneDrive settings and set up OneDrive again. When the option to change the default location appears, choose the OneDrive folder you moved to the new location.

It is essential that you always keep this drive plugged in and powered up. A 16GB flash drive would be almost perfect for OneDrive because you get 15GB of free storage.

Ask the Expert

Roland Waddilove, computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at webuser@dennis.co.uk



MOBILE

Clear out iOS mail

Q I have an iPhone 4S and an iPad Air 2. Both are on iOS 8.4.1. On each, I had roughly the same number of emails, but whereas my iPad was showing a few megabytes of storage used by the email app, my iPhone showed gigabytes of storage used. Clearing all emails, including sent, received and trash, still left 1.8GB showing as email usage.

I have never sent or received large files that could account for so much usage. It means that my apps sometimes don't have enough space to update and I'm limited to which new apps I can download. I have already taken some data-hungry apps off the phone. Opening Settings, General, About gives my capacity as 12.6GB and available as 2.3GB. What can I do about this?

Terry Robinson, via email

A Restarting your phone can clear some problems. Hold down the power button until the option to slide to power off appears. Wait a few seconds, then hold down the power button to switch it back on.

The problem could be due to caching. Caches are temporary files that are created to help speed up access to data or to reduce internet usage. Clearing out caches can release a lot of storage space and



Use Battery Doctor to clear the caches of the apps on your phone

does no harm to apps, which just rebuild their cache the next time they are used. Battery

Doctor (bit.ly/batt384) is a free app that can clear these caches and is definitely worth trying.

Different email accounts have different settings, and iCloud, for example, keeps deleted messages for a certain period of time. Go to Settings, Mail, Contacts, Calendars and select your account. Tap 'Mail Days to Sync' and choose 1 Day.

The Mail account on your phone is just a copy of your online email account and is kept up to date by syncing. Deleting the email account on the phone will clear everything related to this account.

If you then add it again, Mail will sync with your email server and all your messages will be restored, but without any extra junk. Go to Settings, Mail, Contacts, Calendars and select the account. Select Delete Account to remove it.

EMAIL

Date settings stop mail syncing

Q I recently upgraded to Windows 10. When I go to my Mail app, it says: "Your Outlook account settings are out of date". I click 'Fix account' and, after a few minutes, I get the message "Error code 0x80070426".

It quotes the same error message when I go to my Inbox and click 'Sync this view'.

Darren, via email

A You are not the only person who has had this problem. Some people have fixed it by clicking 'Fix account', but this doesn't always work. Try going to Settings, 'Time & language', 'Date & time' and turn off 'Set time automatically'. Make sure the time zone is set correctly.

Alternatively, go to Control Panel, 'Date and Time', click the Internet Time tab, then the 'Change settings' button, and clear the tick against 'Synchronise with an Internet time server'.

GENERAL PC

IObit update problem

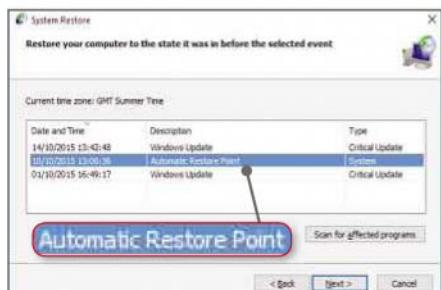
Q I installed IObit Driver Booster 3 Free (www.iobit.com) and let it run. It told me I needed 12 updates to drivers and programs, so I asked it to update the faulty software. During the operation, there was a lot of flashing on the screen, then it locked into a multi-coloured screen. The only way I could stop this was to use Task Manager to cancel the program. I am now left with the Start menu showing two icons for every installed program. One icon for each says "(new)". I am unable to delete or remove these. In the case of CCleaner, the program starts up twice. I am running Windows 10 Professional.

Gerald, via email

A Driver Booster makes a backup when it is run and the previous drivers can be reinstalled. It is hard to see how this could affect the Start menu, though. Your best bet is probably System Restore. This puts back many system settings to their previous values. Type `system restore` into the search box on the taskbar and click 'Create a restore point'. Click System Restore in the window, then click Next in the following window to see a list of restore points. Select one from when the PC was working properly, click Next and follow the prompts.

The Start menu is built from several locations on the drive and it might be useful to check them. Open Explorer and go to:

`C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs`



Undo changes to Windows and fix faults using System Restore



Open another window and go to: C:\Users\YourName\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs

Some folders are hidden, so tick 'Hidden items' on the View tab in Explorer. If there are duplicates, such as a program appearing in both folders, that could be the problem. They should appear in only one location, so delete any that appear in a second location.

VIDEO

Copying DVDs of old TV programmes

Q I have some old TV programmes I recorded to DVD disc (in the PAL format) about 15 years ago. They are rare and I don't want to lose them. Is it legal to copy them? If so, what is the best format for durability? I have an Acer Aspire E15 laptop.

Chris Ellerby, via email

A We're not lawyers, but our understanding is that legally you can only record TV programmes for the purpose of watching them at a more convenient time than when they were originally broadcast, so making a further copy of them 15 years later is probably illegal. However, lots of people have old DVDs and VHS video tapes with TV programmes on them stuck in the back of a cupboard or in a box in the attic. It seems unlikely that anyone is ever going to pursue you through the courts over them, but whether you risk that or not isn't a decision we can make for you. You're more likely to incur the wrath of the law if you share them or try to profit from them.

You can use software such as CDBurnerXP (cdburnerxp.se) to copy the DVDs onto fresh discs. Create an ISO image and store it on your hard drive, so if the DVD is damaged, you can write a new one. DVDs and writers will not be around forever, but they will be available for a few years yet.

MOBILE

Organising iPhone apps

Q I use an Amazon tablet and an iPhone 6, and the one thing that frustrates me more than anything about my phone is the way iOS organises apps and doesn't let you place them on the screen where you want, like you can with Android.

You can organise them in groups or on different screens, but you still have to follow one app with the other - four across by six down - then move to the

next window. It's annoying. When you do group them together, you only get nine apps showing, taking up only 50 per cent of the screen, then you have to scroll to get to the rest, which is a waste of time.

Android, on the other hand, lets you place apps where you like, which is far easier and quicker. Surely, I can't be the only one who finds this annoying? Do you have any suggestions? I don't want to change to an Android phone because I like everything else on my iPhone.

Mark Woolley, via email

A Apple's icons appear in preset rows and columns and there is nothing you can do to change this without jailbreaking the iPhone. This is an extreme undertaking and could invalidate your warranty, so we wouldn't recommend you do it on an in-warranty iPhone 6. As you say, you can organise apps into screens or folders, but neither solution is perfect. If you want a phone you can configure, then Android is clearly best. However, there are still a few options available to you, though they're still not as good as Android's.

If you want more control over how you launch apps, it's worth having a look at the launchers available for iOS. iPhone launchers are not like Android's powerful ones but you might still find them useful. GO Launcher (bit.ly/golaunch384) lets you add app icons to the Today screen, which you access by swiping down from the top of the



Today widgets let you create a home screen with your choice of apps

screen. It's not a good idea to stuff it with 100 apps because it will be hard to find the one you want. However, it can be useful to add your

favourites. You can then pull down and tap an app to run it from anywhere, which is faster than going to the home screen and searching for it.

Launcher with Notification Center Widget (bit.ly/launch384) also adds app icons to the Today screen, although the free version limits the number to eight (35 if you upgrade to Pro for £2.29). It can still be useful to add links to eight of your favourite apps and it can be used with GO Launcher, so you could have two groups of icons. Music Launcher with Notification Center Widget (bit.ly/music384) adds icons to play your favourite playlists, songs, albums, podcasts and audiobooks. So, you could have three groups of icons on the Today screen.

It still isn't as flexible as Android, but it is worth investigating these and other Today screen widgets.

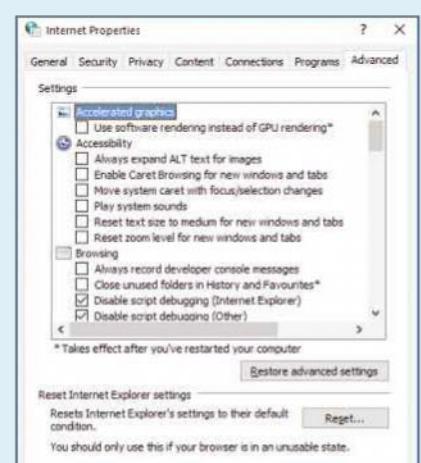
BROWSERS

Reset an IE error message

Q When I try to get on Facebook in IE, I get an error message: "This page cannot be displayed, turn on ssl3.0, tls1.0, tls1.1 and tls1.2 in advanced settings and try connecting again". Whether I tick or untick these boxes, I still get the same message.

Kenny Grant, via email

A This message is usually seen by Internet Explorer users and it appears to be a problem with IE11. You should reset the settings to their default values. Go to the Control Panel and open Internet Options. Start with the Advanced tab and click 'Restore advanced settings', followed by Reset. Check that the default level is set on the Security



Reset Internet Explorer using the Internet Options in the Control Panel

tab, indicated by the grey buttons.

If this doesn't cure the problem, it could be best to switch to Firefox (bit.ly/firefox384) or Chrome (bit.ly/chrome384).

 This fortnight, Roland has been getting to grips with WordPress themes and trying different templates on his blog

Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others, visit forum.webuser.co.uk

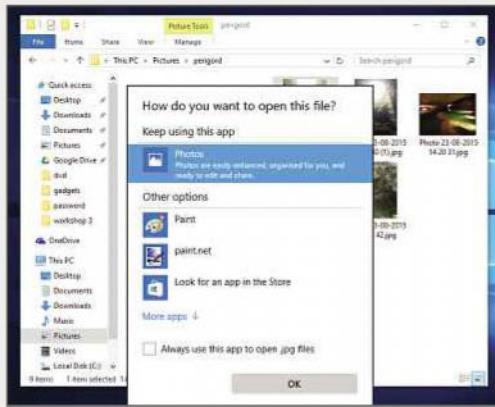
TOP TIP

WINDOWS 10

Get Photo Viewer back in Windows 10

I recently upgraded from Windows 7 and I'm really liking Windows 10. One thing that annoyed me, however, was that double-clicking a photo in Explorer opened it in the Photos app. In the past, it always opened in Windows Photo Viewer. Photos is fine if you want to edit the image, but for viewing and browsing I prefer the old viewer.

The way to go back to the old viewer is to right-click a JPEG photo, go to the 'Open with' menu and click 'Choose another app'. Select Windows Photo Viewer and tick the box 'Always use this app to open .jpg files'. From now on, the old photo viewer will be



Change the default photo viewer in Windows 10 if you'd rather not use the new Photos app

used. If you change your mind, you can switch back to Photos the same way.

Jon Ingram, via email

SOFTWARE

Time your PC's startup

I'm not one for recommending software willy-nilly but I recently came across a program that proved to be very useful. It's called BootRacer (bit.ly/bootracer384) and what it does (very well) is time the Windows startup, recording details of each instance, so that you can compare the results over time or between different PCs. It's not a magic bullet but it gives you some idea of what's 'normal' for your machine so that you can easily identify whether it



BootRacer lets you see how long your PC takes to boot

slows down after updating or installing a program.

I have BootRacer running in a Windows 10 virtual machine, and its startup time seems to vary by about 10 seconds at most. You might find that the program offers to help speed up your boot time by providing links to other programs, but I can't confirm whether these tools are also authentic and safe.

It is, of course, also possible to view your startup times in Windows' built-in Event Viewer. For more information on how to do this, there's a handy guide on How-To Geek (bit.ly/eventviewer384).

izzit and Cantrel, Web User Forums

SOFTWARE

Create text from an image

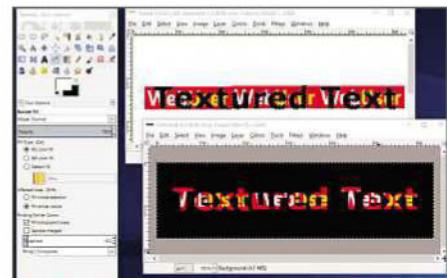
If you want to create some fancy text for a document, web page or report, GIMP (www.gimp.org) can be used to create text that uses a separate image as the fill for the characters. You could call it 'image text' or 'textured text', and it looks really good, as long as you use it in



moderation.

To give it a go, load into GIMP the image you want to use to fill the text. Click the text tool, then click and drag across the image to create a text box. Type the text you want to appear. The effect works best if you select a large and bold font. After entering the text, click the magic wand selection tool and click the first letter. Hold down Shift and click the other letters. In the layers window, click the bottom layer, which is the image that was loaded, and press Ctrl+C. This copies the image in the shape of the text you entered. Create or load a new image, go to the Edit menu and select 'Paste as', then 'New layer'.

L Williamson, via email



Create fancy headings with image backgrounds using GIMP

WINDOWS 10

Fix keyboard shortcuts in Windows 10

I recently installed Windows 10 on a tablet, two laptops and my desktop PC. Unfortunately, the desktop installation took a couple of goes, because I found that it wouldn't let me use keyboard shortcuts such as Windows+E to open File Explorer. Of course, I could still open File Explorer using its taskbar shortcut, but I didn't like that the OS wasn't functioning as it should.

Initially, I decided to roll back to Windows 7 Ultimate because I was also experiencing problems with the right-click menu. The rollback was very fast – I was warned that it could take hours, but

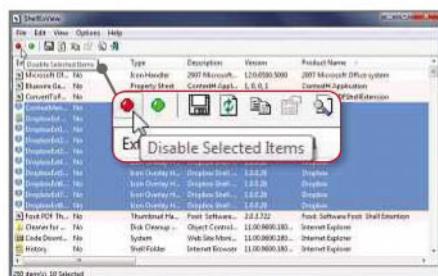


it was completed within about 20 minutes. Three weeks later, curiosity overcame my desire for stability and I repeated the Windows 10 installation. Although it was a lot smoother this time around, I found I still had the same problem with the Windows+E shortcut.

I trawled the web and finally found a thread talking about a small standalone shell extensions manager called ShellExView (go to www.nirsoft.net and search for it). I first tried disabling all non-Microsoft shell extensions and immediately the problem was solved. If you experience the same problem, I'd highly recommend using this free tool to see if it fixes it.

Also, for any Sony Vaio users who have been warned against upgrading your laptops, I would recommend going for it. It has completely revitalised my 2011 laptop, not just by speeding it up but also by solving a problem I was having with the USB ports.

Alphaville, Web User Forums



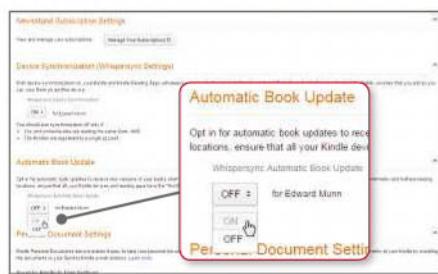
Use ShellExView to clear non-Microsoft shell extensions

EBOOKS

Update your Kindle books

Sometimes, authors or their publishers update their Kindle books. If you'd like to receive these updates automatically, you can turn the option on from the 'Manage Your Content and Devices' page on the Amazon website. To do this, visit www.amazon.co.uk/mycd, select the Settings tab and turn Automatic Book Update to On. Note that if you have only read a few pages of a book, it will, after updating, show as a new book. Don't be concerned, though, because this doesn't mean you've bought another copy of it.

To ensure that you retain your highlights, bookmarks and furthest



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reading points, make sure that all your Kindle devices and apps have Annotation Back Up turned on.

FratPark, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

Change your mouse pointer

It's easy to forget that your mouse pointer can be configured in much the same way as your PC's Desktop, to personalise your work space. In Windows 10, there are three different pointer colours and sizes, which makes a total of nine different mouse pointers. Click Settings on the Start menu and open 'Ease of Access'. Select the Mouse



Choose your favourite settings for the mouse pointer in Windows 10

category and choose the pointer size (small, medium or large) and pointer colour (black, white or an inverting option that changes colour depending on the colour behind it).

Ben Stott, via email

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Stop Twitter videos playing automatically

Twitter used to limit posts to 140-character text messages, but then came images and now there are videos. Recently, a couple of videos in my news feed started playing automatically, so I went to Settings to try to stop this happening. Videos that play automatically are irritating and I have found the setting to stop them.

Click your picture in the top-right corner and select Settings from the menu. In the categories on the left, select Account. Find the setting for Video Tweets and clear the tick box for 'Video autoplay'. Videos will now revert to a static image with a Play button in the middle. If you want to watch the video, just click Play.

George Baker, via email

GENERAL PC

Deactivate your Windows licence key

If you're planning to sell your copy of Windows or move it to another PC, you must deactivate your licence key to guarantee that it will work when you try to use it again. If you're not sure that you know your licence key, you must use a program such as ProduKey (search for it at www.nirsoft.net) to find it before you deactivate it.

Before using ProduKey, you need to

disconnect from the internet and deactivate any security software you have running because it can incorrectly flag up the software as a threat. Be sure to restart the security software again when you've finished, before reconnecting to the internet.

The deactivation command should work on versions of Windows from Vista up to 8.1, but be aware that you can't transfer your copy of Windows if it's an OEM version supplied with your PC.

To perform the deactivation, you need to first run Command Prompt as an administrator by typing cmd into the Start menu, right-clicking the program and selecting 'Run as administrator'. Next, type slmgr.vbs /upk into the console and it will report that your licence key has been deactivated. You'll also see a message on the Desktop saying that Windows is not licensed.

Jack Gold and izzit, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

Make space for Windows 10 upgrade

I have only recently thought about getting my Windows 7 Professional PC ready for upgrading to Windows 10, so I decided to run Windows' Disk Cleanup tool to try to free up some hard-drive space. It was the first time I'd ever used the tool and I noticed that the Temporary Internet Files option, which accounted for a few gigabytes of storage, was unticked for some reason. After ticking this box to delete the files, I also spotted the 'Clean up system files' button. This feature scans your PC for Windows Update files that can be safely removed and, if successful, a Windows Update Cleanup option appears in the main Disk Cleanup interface. Needless to say, I clicked this box, too, and managed to clear almost 8GB of storage in total.

Bedstor, Web User Forums

Web User says: We've got more tips for clearing space on your hard drive in our Web User's Top Tips on page 64.



Click 'Clean up system files' to safely remove old Windows updates



Readers' Helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit forum.webuser.co.uk – it's friendly and free!

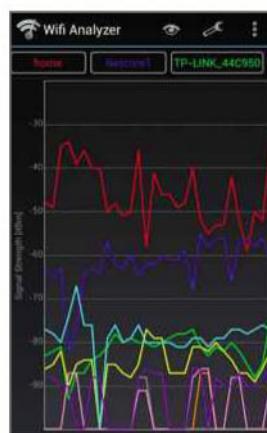
WI-FI

How can I boost my Wi-Fi signal upstairs?

Q My wireless router is installed in my living room downstairs, but my laptop struggles to pick up a good signal when I use it upstairs. Can anyone recommend how I might fix this problem easily? Should I buy a better router?

um_please, Web User Forums

A Wireless signals can be extremely tricky. The strength of your connection can depend on a multitude of factors including the router, the materials your house is made of and the number of other wireless networks in your area. Wi-Fi can also be affected by microwaves. Try to make sure your router is as close as possible to the centre of the house (in terms of height, too).



You can get apps for mobile devices to analyse your Wi-Fi signal

impact on your signal strength. If you live in a built-up area, you might want to try installing a program such as InSSIDer (bit.ly/issider384, though sadly it's no longer available for free) to analyse your surrounding wireless environment first. There are phone apps that will do a similar job – try WiFi Analyzer for Android (bit.ly/wifian384) or Network Analyzer Lite on iOS (bit.ly/netios384).

If the above doesn't work, you could try using HomePlugs, which pass your

internet connection through your home's mains wiring to give you an Ethernet socket and extra wireless point anywhere in your house. You can also get wireless extenders, which pick up the network and replicate it for other areas of your house, but HomePlugs are more effective.

succulent95, Web User Forums

SOFTWARE

Where can I safely download the latest LibreOffice?

Q I recently began using LibreOffice (version 4.4.1.2) in anticipation of Office 2000 not being compatible with Windows 10. Each time I open LibreOffice, I am invited to update to version 5.0.2 but, when I go their site and click Download, it directs me to a Torrent site and also requires a commitment to pay! Could someone explain how I can get the update for free?

weller, Web User Forums

A Visit bit.ly/libreoffice384 and you'll see a button that says Download Version 5.0.2 (under Main Installer). Click it and your browser will start the

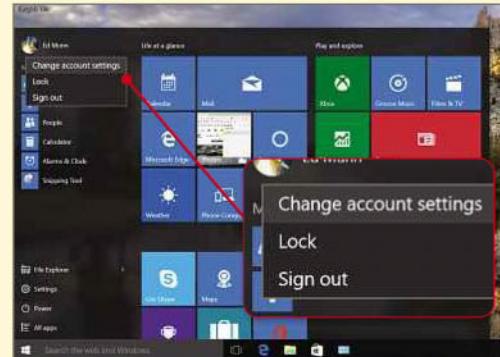
WINDOWS 10

Why can't I use the app store in Windows 10?

Q I set up Windows 10 using an Outlook.com account but for some reason I'm unable to download any apps from the app store. In fact, when I open the app store, I see a totally blank page. What do I need to do to download apps on my PC?

dave1510, Web User Forums

A I was experiencing the same problem and I managed to fix it by verifying my account. To do this, open the Start menu, click your account name or profile picture and select 'Change account settings'. Because you're logged in with a Microsoft



Open 'Change account settings' to verify your account so you can use the app store

account, there should be a Verify button to confirm your identity. Click it and you'll receive an email containing a 7-digit security code that you need to enter on the next screen. Once you've done this, you'll be able to open the app store and download apps as normal.

izzit, Web User Forums

download, giving you the option to Run or Save the file. Different browsers will use slightly different wording for the Save/Run dialogue box and some, such as Edge and Chrome, might start the download automatically. There should be no problems installing the new version of LibreOffice over the top of your existing one, but make sure it's saved to the same installation folder as the previous version to avoid having two installed.

Moonshine, Web User Forums



Download the latest version of LibreOffice directly from the company's website

Star Email

Windows 10 may sabotage old software

Microsoft, in an effort to rectify the Windows 8 fiasco, decided to release Windows 10 as an upgrade, completely free of charge. As far as I am concerned, this was a big con to try to restore its image within the computer fraternity.

In November 2012, I purchased Microsoft Office Home & Student Edition 2010 at a cost of £84.99 and I've now installed the software in Windows 10. Recently, I tried to open a hyperlink in my Excel 2010 address book and was greeted with a message saying: "This operation has been cancelled due to restrictions in effect on this computer. Please contact your system administrator".

I have researched online and found that a large number of people are having the same problem using older



Office software in Windows 10. It would appear that Microsoft may have sabotaged all old Office versions to force people to buy Office 365, which carries an annual cost.

With the advent of adverts in Windows



10, where does the user go from here? Will the full version of the operating system, at a cost of £99, be free of all these restrictions, allowing long-term Microsoft

customers to use the Office software they purchased? Was the free upgrade just a communal 'beta exercise' to make development simpler for Microsoft?

We need help from the technology press to investigate this corrupt company that has gone from bad to worse since Bill Gates decided he'd had enough and retired with our billions. Something is seriously wrong at Microsoft. Please investigate and ask Microsoft to clearly explain its position.

David Guest, via email

Much ado about bandwidth

In Issue 382 (bit.ly/webuser382), Barry Collins makes some interesting points about Windows updates stealing bandwidth. There is no such problem in our home because we are Mac OS and iOS users, and have several of each device. I am running the Caching Service on Mac OS Server, which makes life much more straightforward and saves on bandwidth. This could be a useful thing to promote in your magazine. I wonder if Microsoft will ever introduce a useful app that performs a similar function.

Another issue I'd like to bring up is how much BT in particular focuses on download and not upload speeds. I live 1.5km from our fibre cabinet and, on my Infinity package, you can only get around 16Mbps download speed and a measly 0.6Mbps upload at best. Syncing services such as Evernote, Google Drive and iCloud cannot function reliably with such slow uploads and often freeze and fail.

BT will not do a thing about this problem and there are around 20 dwellings at our end of this line. Virgin



Media isn't available and, even though I've registered my street in the latest campaign, they cannot promise we will ever get it. I get a more reliable 4G signal on EE and regularly have to turn off the Wi-Fi and use 4G in order to upload things! EE offer a 4G service for around £50 per month for a 50GB data package. I welcome comments from other readers.

Nigel Milligan, Heywood

We need more information about updates

I have been a regular reader of *Web User* for many years and always read it from cover to cover, although I don't always understand the more technical content.

Regarding the current ongoing arguments about forced updates, why is it that nearly every time my computer requests to download an update, it's for a Critical Security Update. Is



Microsoft really so unsafe?

Would it not be a good idea to give us details of the reason for each update, so that we can make up our own minds if we need it or not? With all the scams around these days, people need to understand exactly what is being added to their computers. I personally am very nervous of allowing anything onto my PC unless I know that it's safe.

Peter Waterman, via email

TalkTalk's terrible security is a national disgrace

As a former TalkTalk customer, I am horrified that despite leaving the useless ISP more than a year ago, my bank details, email address and other personal information may have ended up in the hands of teenage hackers. What on Earth gives the company the right to hang on to former customers' data, and store it in such a lax manner? This is a national disgrace and I shall be writing to Ofcom to complain.

I am also shocked that this is the third time TalkTalk has been hacked this year. I have to laugh that a company that provides 'top tips for staying safe online' on its website is so terrible at protecting its own customers' data. I laugh again,

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although this time more uneasily, when TalkTalk says it's been unable to contact previous customers to warn them of the risk. If the hackers can break into the company's website and steal the contact details, then it looks pretty bad if no-one at TalkTalk is able to find them!

I am now with Virgin Media and couldn't be happier – great customer service, speedy broadband, lots of useful extras and no massive hacks due to poor security practices (at least, not yet). Quite why I should have to suffer the stress caused by my old ISP's ineptness is ridiculous – it's like paying for misdeeds committed in a previous life!

Kelvin Woodward, via email

Manufacturers are forcing us to upgrade

I was interested to read the letter in Issue 382 about old gadgets lasting longer. I have recently begun to suspect that manufacturers are now deliberately designing their phones, tablets and other devices so that they last no more than a couple of years and you're forced to fork out for a replacement. You rarely meet anyone who has had the same iPhone 4 for five years or more; they usually say they had to upgrade to a new one because the old one was becoming so slow and the battery kept draining.

Compare that to the number of people,



like your correspondent Mr Parry, who are still using old Nokias without any problems.

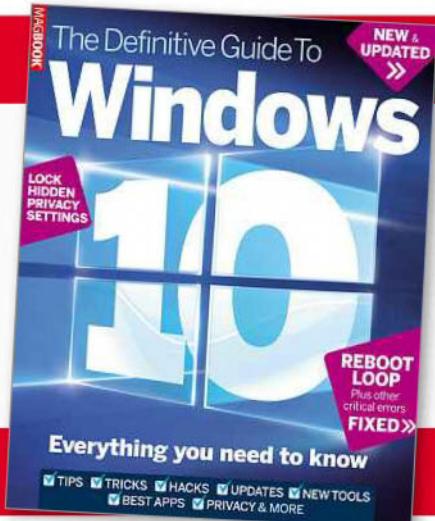
I wouldn't put it past Apple and Google to deliberately cripple devices through compulsory updates, so that people are forced to upgrade. Just look at all the users (including me) who had terrible problems after installing Lollipop on their Nexus 7s. It wouldn't be so bad if companies were honest about the durability and longevity of their devices when you bought them. If you're paying upwards of £500 for a phone, then I think you have the right to know if it's likely to go kaput after a couple of years.

Ray Howells, Wakefield

ON SALE NOW!

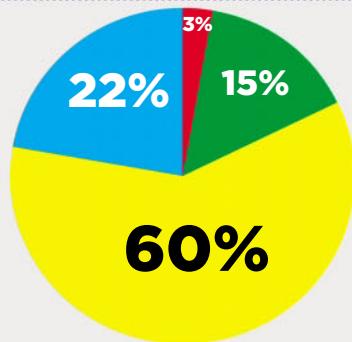
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Your Shout

On Webuser.co.uk this fortnight we asked...



NEXT FORTNIGHT Do you always change your password following a hack? Vote online at www.webuser.co.uk

My wife loves her 17-year-old phone

Regarding 'old gadgets' (Inbox, Issue 382), my wife is still using a Nokia 3210 that I bought her in 1998, and, despite me offering to change it several times, is happy to stick with it. All it has cost me so far is a new battery in 2008, so the running costs are negligible. This is the one thing she will not recycle!

Kevin Spencer, Facebook



Pottermore has lost its magic

In Best New Websites in Issue 382, you reviewed Pottermore (www.pottermore.com) and mentioned how it has changed from its original concept. Well, that's a bit of an understatement, because it is just rubbish now. They have taken away everything that was good about the site, including the community features that let you interact with other Harry Potter fans, the challenges and competitions, and fun, interactive stuff such as casting spells and making potions. You don't even get sorted into a house anymore! Basically, they've sucked all the magic out of it, and made it bland and corporate.

Don't get me wrong, I like that it's now easier to find the writing by JK Rowling, such as the character biographies and lots of details that don't appear in the books. And the photos and illustrations are better quality than they were on the old Pottermore. But the rest of the site just seems like a marketing tool for whatever Harry Potter cash-in they are



promoting at the moment.

I wish you could still access the old site from within the new one – with all the money they've made from the franchise, surely it wouldn't cost that much to run?

Lizzie Day, via email

Why no subtitles on Now TV?

I wonder if you have ever highlighted to readers that the popular Now TV service, which is available as both a set-top box and an app for Android and iOS, does not have subtitles on any of its films? You can buy a Sky Movies Month Pass, but that does not include subtitles for the benefit of the deaf, or for people like myself who have difficulty understanding actors' voices, especially Americans. Does anyone know why there is no subtitles facility on this set-top box? Is it a matter of cost?

Paul Hildreth, via email

Please Tesco, don't ditch the Hudl

I was surprised and disappointed to read that Tesco will not be releasing another Hudl (Need to Know, Issue 383). It is by far the best Android tablet I have ever used and such good value – I got mine with Clubcard points for £80. Yes, it did have pre-installed Tesco apps on it but you weren't forced to use them and they were easy to ignore. I guess I will have to

be extra careful with my current Hudl because if it dies, then I



won't be able to get another one. With all the stick Tesco gets, you'd think they know when they were onto a good thing. So come on, please Tesco, give us another Hudl!

Andrea Marksman, sent from my Hudl!

What you say...

MICROSOFT WANTS YOU TO SWAP CHROME AND FIREFOX FOR EDGE. WILL YOU?

Microsoft can nudge as much as it likes, but I will continue to use Chrome and Firefox. I've removed Edge from my Taskbar. I don't like it one bit.

Geoffrey Boow

Not a hope in hell.

John Hannibal Swift

Nope. I'll stick with Opera, thanks.

Roger Whitcomb @milairpix

Microsoft's browsers are too slow. But I don't trust Google. It's Firefox all the way for me.

Vince Barnes

Stuff trying to persuade us to switch to Edge, Microsoft – what about a service pack for Windows 10?

David Benedict Hutchinson

I won't use Edge on my PC until it is compatible with LastPass.

Rob Clayton

DO YOU ALWAYS TRUST REVIEWS ON AMAZON?

I read them, but take them with a pinch of salt. If there are enough good ones, then I may be swayed.

Dave McAlister @dpmcalister

No, I only trust what *Web User* says, but I read and research from multiple sources.

Jack @imthegoldmaster

If I believed 98% of the reviews about TalkTalk, I'd never have joined as a customer!

Martin Phillip

I don't trust reviews on the majority of websites, not just Amazon.

Caroline Sharman

I usually check to see if they have an online shop, too, and if they use PayPal. Then you're guaranteed that if the reviews are bogus and your goods are not as described, you can get a refund.

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

WILL YOU SWITCH FROM TALKTALK FOLLOWING THE LATEST HACK?

Let's see how they respond to it in the next few weeks. If there's no compensation, then yes – we all should move.

Kev Hopwood

I've been a TalkTalk customer for around six years and I'm very happy with the service. Touch wood, my account is intact. But if something like this happened again then, unfortunately, I would consider leaving for my own peace of mind.

Brian Brown

Yes, as soon as my contract is up, I am off. This is the last straw.

Trish @Writer53

No. I've never had any problems with TalkTalk. Any company could get hacked. You can't keep swapping.

Sue Malin

Done and dusted this morning. I'm not giving them another chance to mess up.

Nicola @driffy72

I only recently renewed my contract, so I might use the new UK 30-day refund laws to leave with penalty.

Laura Bailey @laurabailey

I think it's time the industry worked together to tackle this rather than rely on everyone working independently. Think of it like this: World War Two saw people collaborate, so why not now for this 21st-century threat?

Chris Armstrong

! Page 404

Ripping apart BT won't make broadband better. Ripping into BT will, says **Barry Collins**



Why BT needs a boot up the backside

Here's the thing. BT, ably assisted by that damp paper bag of a regulator, Ofcom, isn't very good. The "fibre" broadband that BT is laying all over the country – partly paid for by us taxpayers – isn't fibre at all but leaky old copper with go-faster stripes. It constantly pushes up prices (as I highlighted in my column in Issue 379), and if anything ever goes wrong with your broadband connection or you need a new line fitted, you might as well book the week off work to get it sorted.

BT badly needs a kick up the backside, but the chin-strokers at Ofcom might as well be delivering it in fluffy slippers. Egged on by rivals such as Sky and TalkTalk, the regulator is deciding whether to break BT in two: one half devoted to building and maintaining the network, the other half to selling broadband and other services to mugs like you and me.

BT's none too keen on this idea and neither am I. The company is already split internally along those lines, and I see no evidence that formally tearing BT apart will improve broadband speeds or speed up repairs. In fact, I suspect it could make matters worse.

Here, then, is how to properly fix BT:

Fines for late and missed appointments

In the same way that train companies are now forced to compensate commuters when the wrong kind of sunshine delays the 06:45 from Paddington, so BT should be forced to pay customers when it fails to turn up



on time. According to Sky, BT misses more than 500 appointments to install new lines ordered by Sky customers every month, and 4,000 jobs aren't completed on the first visit.

When a BT contractor came to install my new fibre line last year, he told me I was lucky I was the first job on his call sheet as appointments at the end of the day are always cancelled, because BT doesn't allow enough time

for engineers to get from one job to another. Charging £130 compensation for missed appointments (the fee BT charges to send out an engineer) and £50 for delays of more than 30 minutes would focus minds back at BT HQ.

Scrap pointless phone boxes

BT is still forced, by law, to maintain tens of thousands of public toilets, sorry, telephone boxes. Of course, these

rusting eyesores get used about as often as Patrick Stewart's hairdryer because everyone's got mobiles, making them a huge loss-maker even despite the 60p minimum call charge. Rip them out, give the few people who rely on phone boxes a free mobile, and force BT to spend all the money it saves on improving rural broadband.

Place a cap on charges for slow broadband

Having benefited from practically all of the taxpayers' money put towards improving Britain's broadband, BT's now shrugging its shoulders when it comes to getting that awkward last 10% of homes up to speed. Economically, it makes no sense for BT to invest further, so it needs an incentive. Ofcom should cap broadband fees at £1 per megabit-per-second of download speed. If you're only getting a miserly 2Mbps, BT can only charge you £2 per month. Let's see how quickly BT and other ISPs change their minds when they can't profit from your crappy broadband.

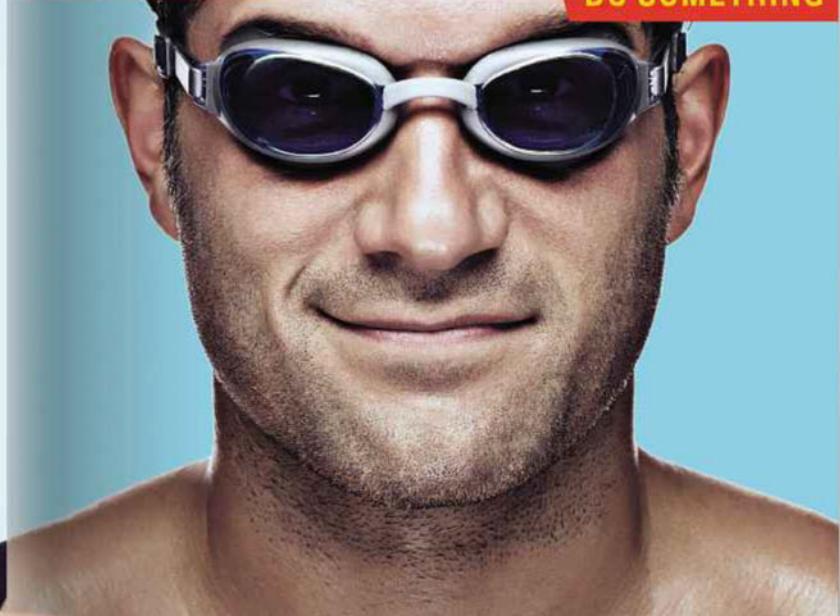
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